

AS CROWDS FLOCK TO
DURHAM MINERS' GALA...

Demo shows mood
for Corbyn's policies >>Pages 4&5

END AUSTERITY!
NOW
WE HAVE
PAID
ENOUGH



London Pride, Saturday 8 July

WHY DO THE RIGHT
HATE SEX? >>Pages 14&15

Socialist Worker

£1 | No 2561 | 5-11 July 2017 | socialistworker.co.uk

MAY LURCHES FROM CRISIS TO CRISIS

CLEAR OUT TORY TRASH

● SMASH
THE PAY
CAP

● MAKE
THE RICH
PAY



GRENFELL

Chiefs resign as
pressure builds
for justice

THE CAMPAIGN for justice for the people murdered at Grenfell Tower has scored some successes in the past week—and it can push on for more.

There is deep anger among residents at the contempt shown for working class people before—and after—the fire.

>>Pages 2&3



MARXISM 2017

IDEAS FOR
A WORLD IN
TURMOIL

A four day political
festival hosted by the
Socialist Workers Party

Opens this Thursday
until Sunday 9 July

London, See page 16
marxismfestival.org.uk

DEATH IN CUSTODY

Why did the
cops kill Edson
Da Costa?

SIX DAYS after Edson Da Costa was arrested by armed police he was dead. Eyewitnesses say cops were “rough” with Edson and that he couldn’t breathe. His family want answers. Socialist Worker spoke to members of Edson’s family.

>>Pages 10&11



Councillors bar survivors from meeting

IN ANOTHER gesture of contempt towards survivors of the Grenfell Tower fire, Kensington and Chelsea council barred them and other local residents from a council cabinet meeting last week.

Moyra Samuels, who has helped to organise meetings and protests demanding justice for the residents of Grenfell, tried to attend. She said, “We want to hear what the plans are for the future. They need to talk to people as a whole.

“It’s a continuation of what they’ve done from the beginning of this avoidable disaster.

“They’ve dodged their responsibility completely, hidden away and not come out and talked to the community.”

The council intended to hold the meeting entirely behind closed doors.

However, a group of media organisations obtained a high court order preventing the council from banning journalists.

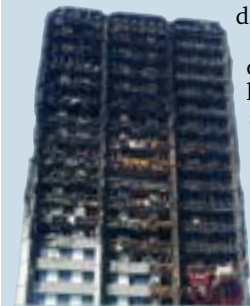
When the meeting started, the then Tory leader Nick Paget-Brown said many of the criticisms of the council would be “challenged” in future.

But he said the rest of the discussion about the tragedy could not be held with journalists present and closed the meeting.

The Labour group at the council demanded the resignation of the whole cabinet of the Tory-run council.

Beinazir Lasharie, a councillor who lived near Grenfell Tower, said residents had been “fobbed off”. She told reporters she had come to the meeting to have her questions answered on behalf of residents but had been denied.

The council leadership said it wanted a closed meeting because it fears protests.



Chiefs resign as pressure builds for Grenfell justice

by ALISTAIR FARROW

THE CAMPAIGN for justice for the people murdered at Grenfell Tower has scored some successes in the past week—and it can push on for more.

There is deep anger at the contempt shown for working class people before—and after—the fire.

Kensington and Chelsea council leader Nick Paget-Brown and lead councillor for housing Rock Feilding-Mellen have both resigned from their positions. But they remain councillors.

Paget-Brown’s replacement as council leader, Elizabeth Cameron, says she is “truly sorry” for what happened but she was part of his cabinet.

Chief executive of the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO) Robert Black has also gone. He said it was to “concentrate on assisting with the investigation and inquiry”.

Required

They join council chief executive Nicholas Holgate who stepped down on 22 June. He said that Tory local government minister Sajid Javid “required the leader of the council to seek my resignation”.

The resignations show that the campaign is having some effect and needs to keep the pressure on the people at the top of the government.

“The only thing that works on



A TRIO of villains—Nick Paget-Brown (left), Robert Black and Rock Feilding-Mellen (right)

these people is shame,” Grenfell survivor Joe Delaney told Socialist Worker.

“When you highlight the sheer hypocrisy of their position it becomes untenable. It’s having an effect to an extent.

“I wouldn’t like to take credit for all of these resignations, but I hope it’s helping keep the pressure on.”

The arrogance of Tory councillors and their remoteness from ordinary people has been exposed in the past weeks. During his resignation speech, Paget-Brown gave a mealy-mouthed apology for the “perceived

failures” of the council.

Last week it emerged that at least one survivor was still having rent deducted. Tory councillor Catherine Faulks said it was “a tiny thing” and complained that the media had treated the council unfairly.

People need security to rebuild their lives, and Kensington and Chelsea council is unwilling to offer that. Survivors who spoke to Socialist Worker said they had not seen a support worker.

The Tories’ own three-week deadline to rehouse people ran out on Wednesday. Some 20 people being

housed in a nearby Premier Inn hotel are set to be kicked out at the end of the month.

Survivors are being portrayed as picky and difficult because they don’t want to be rehoused miles from their home, or in tower blocks. But they didn’t cause the fire, the Tories did.

In the most devastating of circumstances, for which they are wholly responsible, the Tories remain as contemptuous and detached as ever.

The rottenness goes to the heart of the borough and up to the top of Westminster. A few sacrificial lambs is nowhere near enough.

Vague promises mean nothing from vicious Tory ministers

THE TORIES announced last week that the final figure of the dead will not be released until around the new year.

But the real figure will never be known unless there is a complete amnesty on prosecutions or deportations for anyone caught up in the fire.

“I would urge those with information to come forward without fear of prosecution,” said local government minister Sajid Javid.

He declared an amnesty on people subletting flats in the tower but nobody

knows how long this attitude will last.

On Sunday the British Red Cross called for an amnesty on undocumented migrants who know people who died in the fire.

Tory prime minister Theresa May claimed the Tories would “not use this tragic incident as a reason to carry out immigration checks on those involved or on those providing vital information to identify victims”.

But that vague promise means nothing without solid guarantees.

“What you need is to

create a situation where people feel really confident that they can come forward without any fear of reprisals,” said Alex Fraser from the British Red Cross.

He went on to call for a two-year amnesty for undocumented migrants who came forward.

That’s not enough—one should be deported, not today, not tomorrow and not in two years’ time.

And the Tories should be paying the air fares of anyone who needs to come to Britain to attend funerals of the dead. They are responsible for the deaths.



DEMANDING JUSTICE on the People’s Assembly demonstration (see pages 4&5) in London last Saturday

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

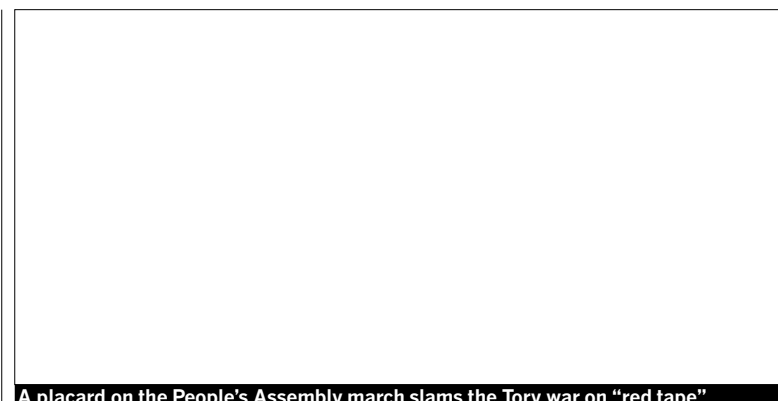
Warnings ignored in a Tory bonfire of regulations

THE TORIES and their friends in the right wing press have been working overtime to spread the blame for the Grenfell Tower murders around. They also want to deflect attention from a culture at the top of the Tory party.

“What they seem to be trying to do is just make this a debate about cladding,” survivor Joe said. “That seems to be the spin on the issue at the moment, but it goes way beyond that.”

One fire safety professional told Socialist Worker, “The 2005 regulations only deal with the common areas, the internal areas. The cladding and anything on the exterior of the building is not considered as part of a fire safety audit.”

After the Lakanal House fire in 2009 an inquiry found that



tower blocks should be retro-fitted with sprinkler systems. It wasn’t implemented, merely recommended to councils.

A new government fire safety expert panel is to be set up and

headed by Sir Ken Knight. He once advised that retro-fitting sprinkler systems to tower blocks was not “economically viable”.

The Tories ignored warnings and are desperate to shift

the spotlight off the top-level decisions which created the conditions for Grenfell to burn.

For instance, in 2013 former Tory local government minister Eric Pickles condemned the Welsh Assembly for introducing tighter building codes.

This came after the biggest construction firm in Britain said it would not build homes because of tighter building restrictions.

And at the 2013 Tory party conference former Tory minister for Wales David Jones slammed the proposal to fit every new house with a sprinkler system as “bizarre”.

Former Tory leader David Cameron wondered aloud in 2014, “What else can we throw on the red tape bonfire while we’re at it?”

Public inquiry must look at wider political responsibility

THE GRENFELL Tower inquiry was supposed to look into the wider political responsibility for why the inferno took place.

But inquiry head Sir Martin Moore-Bick was “doubtful” that it would cover more than “basic factual questions”. The implication was that the police’s criminal investigation will be left to determine who’s criminally responsible, but not necessarily politically.

Activists and survivors have slammed Moore-Bick. Under pressure, he was then prepared to look at a “broad interpretation

of what caused the fire”.

“I met Moore-Bick at the meeting on Thursday,” Grenfell survivor Joe Delaney told Socialist Worker. “I came out of the meeting and said, ‘I’m not satisfied but I’m prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt.’

Satisfy

“That lasted two hours until he said he wouldn’t satisfy anyone.”

Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn called for a broader inquiry, arguing there were “much wider implications for national policy issues”. Now

Labour’s shadow fire minister and its Kensington and Chelsea MP say Moore-Bick should quit amid claims he does not have the support of survivors and local residents.

After the Hillsborough football stadium disaster in 1989, the first inquiry introduced new regulations for stadiums. Moore-Bick is managing expectations for a similar outcome.

The families and friends of the 96 dead at Hillsborough had to wait decades for any sort of justice (see page 6). No one should have to wait that long.

IN FOCUS

Who was checking on our safety?

OVER 180 high-rise buildings across 51 local authorities had failed fire safety tests on their cladding as Socialist Worker went to press—a 100 percent fail rate.

“The building control regulations are very woolly about what types of materials to use,” one fire safety expert told Socialist Worker.

“That’s why you’ve got so many buildings failing this test. They don’t specify whether panels should be combustible or non-combustible.”

Meanwhile, the investigation into the Grenfell refurbishment continues to get murkier.

Over 60 companies and organisations involved in the tower’s refurbishment are now in the spotlight.

Cheaper

The firm which organised the refurbishment of Grenfell, Rydon, subcontracted out parts of the work.

That meant that the cladding used was not the fire-resistant zinc-coated one the residents had approved, but a cheaper aluminium-coated one produced by US firm Arconic. It saved just £300,000.

Arconic has pulled the cladding from distribution worldwide and is facing legal action from shareholders after its share price plummeted in the wake of the Grenfell fire.

Rydon is now suing Camden council. The north London council said the work Rydon had done “did not satisfy our independent laboratory testing or the high standards we set for contractors”.

A senior executive from the firm that made the insulation boards fitted to Grenfell Tower is an adviser to the government on building regulations.

Mark Allen, technical director of Saint Gobain UK, is on the Building Regulations Advisory Committee, which advises local government minister Sajid Javid.

DEMONSTRATE

JUSTICE FOR GRENFELL

No cover-up. Demand a people’s public inquiry.

Wednesday 19 July, 6-8pm

Kensington and Chelsea town hall, London W8 7NX

Get in touch with Socialist Worker



Email reports@socialistworker.co.uk
Web www.socialistworker.co.uk
Facebook “Socialist Worker (Britain)”
Twitter @socialistworker



Newsdesk
020 7840 5656
Circulation
020 7840 5601



Write to
Socialist Worker
PO Box 71327
London
SE11 9BW



Huge demo in London says get the Tories out

Last week's protest showed ordinary people's determination to fight—and optimism about winning real change

TENS OF thousands of people marched through central London last Saturday to demand an end to Tory rule.

The protest, called by the People's Assembly and backed by many unions and campaigns, was a great display of defiance.

Marchers were angry at austerity, racism and pay curbs. They attacked the Tories' £1 billion bribe to the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) while their services face cuts.

Protesters chanted, "Where is the money tree? Go and ask the DUP."

Sophia told Socialist Worker, "I'm here because there's no future in this country for my children. But there's a magic money tree for the DUP.

"I'm fucking livid."

Many saw the Grenfell Tower fire as a symbol of everything that is wrong with a society that puts profit before people's lives.

Firefighter

Sue told Socialist Worker, "My son in law is a firefighter and he was sent into Grenfell Tower. That fire was totally avoidable. I'm furious."

Unite member Kathryn came on a coach from Durham. "My decision to come was heavily influenced by Grenfell," she said.

"I want to show some solidarity with those who lost their lives and

BACK STORY

People travelled from across Britain to join the People's Assembly protest last Saturday

● It saw tens of thousands march in London to demand an end to the Tory government

● Many marchers saw the Grenfell Tower fire as a symbol of everything wrong with society

● There was anger at cuts as the Tories give £1 billion to the DUP

● And there was widespread enthusiasm for left wing Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn

the survivors who are now fighting for justice."

The march assembled at BBC Broadcasting House for a march to parliament. Groups of workers assembled in blocs to march together, as did campaigns such as Stand Up To Racism.

Several speakers said 100,000 had joined the protest. Some shoppers applauded it as it snaked down Regent Street.

The march showed the mood to resist—and also a sense of optimism after the surge in support for Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party.

Royal Mail worker Nat told



MARCHERS IN Parliament Square for a protest against the Tories last Saturday

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Socialist Worker, "People are becoming interested in politics across the generations. It's inspiring.

"Corbyn is bringing class into the mainstream."

Unison and Labour Party member Linda from Portsmouth said she felt "angry but also empowered".

"More people are moving to the left and towards Corbynism," she said. "It feels like things are changing—we need to grasp it."

Corbyn addressed the protest in Parliament Square as the crowd sang, "Oh Jeremy Corbyn".

He said, "We were written off by the mainstream, but something

happened. It was the people registering to vote and the people getting involved in the social media campaign.

"And it was the tens of thousands who came to rallies saying the people are united and determined."

He added, "The Tories are in retreat, austerity is in retreat."

There was fighting talk from union leaders—but some marchers were clear that they expect much more from them (see box, right).

There is a new sense of hope after the election.

But although Conservative MPs could topple May for their own

reasons, getting rid of the Tories will require a serious mass mobilisation.

The mood for change needs to fuel action in the streets and the workplaces, not just inside the Labour Party or in elections.

If Jeremy Corbyn and the union leaders call now for a mass demonstration outside the Tory conference in Manchester in October it will be massive.

And everyone needs to press union leaders for strikes that can take on the bosses everywhere.

Go to socialistworker.co.uk to view a gallery of images and video footage from the protest

McDonnell—"Seize the time"

SHADOW chancellor John McDonnell slammed the Tories' "grubby deal with the reactionary DUP".

"If they can find the money for the DUP they can find the money for the rest of the country," he said. "We will bring this government down. And you can help.

"Let's divide, demoralise and drive them from office.



John McDonnell

Another world is in sight—let's seize the moment."

McDonnell didn't specify how to drive the Tories out beyond saying people should "stand up".

Shadow home secretary Diane Abbott addressed the crowd outside the BBC before the march set off.

"We are here for the many not the few," she said to cheers. "We believe that people are increasingly with us."

Union heads must lead a real fightback

UNISON GENERAL secretary Dave Prentis told marchers, "This country under Jeremy Corbyn is rising up. We will not rest. We will keep marching."

Prentis said he would fight to scrap the public sector pay cap and protesters chanted against the cap.

But some marchers wanted unions to lead a fight.

Theresa, a Doncaster care worker on the march, said, "Everybody's had enough of year after year of the 1 percent pay cap.

"Unison is the biggest health union but we're not taking a lead over fighting.

"We should be balloting for action. If you don't have a go you'll never win."

Unite union general secretary Len McCluskey said, "Prime minister, for the good of the nation, go and go now."

And Trade Union Congress (TUC) leader Frances O' Grady said, "Working people are hungry for change. We want a pay rise.

"We're not going to put up with it anymore."

But the TUC has just called off a rally planned for 17 July against the pay cap, and shows no sign of trying to coordinate strikes to break it.

PCS union leader Mark Serwotka said Corbyn will be the next prime minister.

"One way we can make that happen more quickly is through a public sector strike," he said.

'We're at breaking point, we can't take more cuts'

THE HARSH experience of austerity and attacks on key services fuelled anger among demonstrators.

Saira came from Huddersfield to support the campaign to defend the health service. She told Socialist Worker, "I just really hate the Tories.

"If they close our hospital my family and friends will be affected.

"They want to move it to Halifax, which is miles away. How many deaths will that cause?"

Damian, a teacher and NUT union member from Hull, told Socialist Worker, "Teachers are at the end of their tether. Kids are having their curriculum cut.

"There's less teaching assistants to help."

Taz from Norfolk said, "The public sector pay cut is atrocious. I hate the idea that the people working so hard to help us are suffering."

Special needs teaching assistant Mica travelled to the protest from Liverpool. I can't



School worker Mica on the march

imagine how there can be any more cuts," she said.

"We're at breaking point."

And Nicola from London added, "They need to put money into schools and public services.

"Listen to the 'little people' instead of making us pay for the bankers' mistakes."

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

THE TORIES ARE DOWN BUT NOT OUT—START KICKING

IT'S LESS than a month since the general election and the Tories have dropped almost their entire manifesto.

Environment minister Therese Coffey confirmed this week that the Tories don't plan to hold a free vote on fox hunting.

And the government is "reflecting" on its election threat to scrap free school meals for young children.

Many of their nasty policies, such as grammar schools and the so-called "dementia tax", had already been dropped from the queen's speech.

Last week their weakness in parliament forced them to announce that women from Northern Ireland can access abortion for free in England (see page 6).

Arguing

Top Tories are publicly arguing about university tuition fees and the public sector pay cap.

Former Tory chancellor Lord Lamont lamented in the Sun newspaper this week, "If ministers go on like this, the government will disintegrate."

The Tories are on the ropes but they won't collapse automatically. The best way to get them out is

to fight for the biggest level of resistance possible.

More and more people want an alternative. Tens of thousands marched in London last Saturday demanding an end to Tory rule (see left). Jeremy Corbyn's left wing policies have mass support.

But there has also been a block on resistance.

The trade union leaders could call and lead the kind of action that can beat the Tories. They have repeatedly failed to do so. And workers have paid the price.

A new report this week found that public sector workers' median hourly earnings fell by nearly 6 percent between 2005 and 2015. There was anger at the

The Tories are on the rocks but they won't collapse automatically

pay cap on the protest. Even Tory ministers such as Boris Johnson are saying it should go.

But are the unions organising any action, let alone strikes, to demand better wages? No. On the contrary, the TUC last week called off a planned rally against the cap.

Crisis

It's tempting to sit and watch the Tory crisis unfold. But ordinary people have the power to push the Tories to breaking point.

Everyone can do something—whether it's protesting at a Tory MP, pushing for strikes at work or building protests to defend services. There should definitely be a major protest at the Tory party conference in Manchester in October.

We want all the Tories out—but Theresa May's resignation will be a good start. As Lamont said, for the Tories, "It is important she survives."

He knows that if she goes, the "free-for-all" in the Tory party will continue—and damage the party.

The Tories are at one of their weakest points since coming to office in 2010. We have a real opportunity to get rid of them—let's seize the time.

COUNCILS NEED TO FIGHT

EVEN IF councils stopped filling in potholes, maintaining parks and open spaces it wouldn't be enough to satisfy the Tories' demand for cuts.

It wouldn't be enough if they went further and closed all children's centres, libraries, museums, leisure centres, turned off every street light and shut all discretionary bus routes.

By 2020 councils in England would still face a £6 billion funding gap and lose 75 percent of the government funding they had in

2015. In the five years to 2015 almost 40 percent was cut from an even greater total funding figure.

The Tory plan to starve councils of cash has reshaped how local government is both funded and delivered while spineless councillors make cuts to services.

It means private firms hollow out our services, slash jobs and point the finger elsewhere when they fail. Councillors who outsourced their statutory responsibilities do the same.

Council chiefs now argue the

answer is to hike our council tax and retain all business rates collected locally. This is no solution.

For too long Labour councils have balanced their books on the backs of the poor. Or they shamefully dressed their cuts up as being about equality.

It's about time Labour's leadership told its councils to protect the working class and launch a national fightback against cuts. That means more than waiting for a Labour government.



SHADOW HOME secretary Diane Abbott on the protest

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

FIGURE IT OUT

£1 billion

what Theresa May handed the DUP in return for helping her cling on to government

£3 billion

what the Tories will snatch from schools every year by 2020 if cuts go ahead

£22 billion

the amount the Tories want the NHS to "save" by 2020

International Socialism ★155

Issue 155 is out now, featuring

● Alex Callinicos on the Corbyn surge

● Vanina Giudicelli on elections in

France

● Héctor Sierra on Podemos

● Julie Sherry on fast food rights

isj.org.uk ● 0207 840 5640

SEIZE THE TIME

Ian Taylor on how to turn the class vote into action

Plus Glyn Robbins looks at housing after Grenfell, Rosemarie Nünning on how attitudes to abortion change, Joseph Choonara discusses reading Marx's Capital today

Order copies or subscribe: socialistreview.org.uk | 020 7840 5630

JULY/AUG ISSUE OUT NOW £3

ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Labour right's Brexit bungle helps Tories

NEWLY ELECTED Labour MPs crammed into Westminster Hall last week and sang “Oh, Jeremy Corbyn.” But it didn't take long for some of them to return to business as usual and stab him in the back.

Last Thursday 50 Labour MPs defied the party whip and voted with the Liberal Democrats and Scottish Nationalists for an amendment to the queen's speech. It called for Britain to stay in the European Single Market and Customs Union after Brexit.

They were headed by Chukka Umunna. He's held up as a Blairite standard-bearer, though he chickened out of running for the party leadership two years ago, when Corbyn won.

The rebels have been supported by those on the liberal left who dream that Brexit can be reversed. Theresa May's disastrous snap election has encouraged them in this belief.

Various EU bigwigs—for example Donald Tusk, president of the European Council—have expressed a similar hope.

The Brexit negotiations will probably contain many pitfalls, and the outcome is hard to predict, but there are three reasons why Umunna & Co were completely wrong.

First, the Single Market isn't some neutral device helping economies to trade with each other. It was introduced in the mid-1980s essentially by two figures—Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher and Jacques Delors, then president of the European Commission.

Thatcher was, of course, alongside US president Ronald Reagan, a key architect of the neoliberal counter-revolution of the 1980s. Delors, French finance minister in the first half of that decade, drove through France's version of these changes.

The Single Market has accordingly acted, in the words of the sociologist Wolfgang Streeck, as “a machine for the liberalisation of European capitalism”. It has been used to support an agenda of privatisation and deregulation and to block any extensions of social ownership.

It's not surprising, then, that Corbyn and his shadow chancellor, John McDonnell, who want to reverse austerity and partially bring back into the public sector some of the industries privatised by the Tories, aren't keen for Britain to stay in the Single Market.

Membership

The only thing to be said in the Single Market's favour is that free movement of labour is one of the “four freedoms” required for membership.

But Umunna, like other Blairites, is on record saying he would support leaving the Single Market if that were necessary to get rid of free movement. So no one should imagine that this rebellion was about defending the rights of EU citizens in Britain.

The second reason the amendment was wrong was that it reflected a profound misunderstanding of what happened in the election. May tried to make it about Brexit in the hope of winning over Labour and Ukip voters who had backed Leave in the referendum last year. This tactic failed because Corbyn refused to walk into May's trap.

In other words, he did not follow the advice of the diehard Labour Remainers and campaign against Brexit. He also didn't side with the right-wing Brexiters.

Lots of commentators have attacked him for being a “bystander” in the Brexit debate or for his “ambiguity” on the issue. But Corbyn understood voters better than his critics.

By refusing to focus on Brexit he avoided antagonising the pro-Labour cities that voted heavily to remain or the many Labour voters in the north and in Wales who backed Leave. This “ambiguity” allowed Labour to concentrate on campaigning against austerity and for its manifesto of popular economic and social reforms.

This brings me to the third reason why the rebels were wrong. The election has left the Tories in disarray—divided not just over Brexit, but also over whether to press on with austerity. Over the past week cabinet ministers who have publicly disagreed included Philip Hammond, David Davis, Michael Gove, and Boris Johnson. By drawing attention to Labour's divisions the rebels were throwing the Tories a lifeline.

The way forward for the left is not to defend the indefensible neoliberal EU. It's to press home the battle against the Tories on austerity. This means more mobilisations on the streets, not cross-party parliamentary manoeuvres by treacherous Blairites.

Top cop faces manslaughter trial for Hillsborough deaths

by SADIE ROBINSON

FORMER CHIEF superintendent David Duckenfield has been charged with manslaughter by gross negligence in relation to the 1989 Hillsborough football disaster. Five others have also been charged.

Some 96 Liverpool fans died after a crush built up in pens 3 and 4 at the Leppings Lane end of Hillsborough stadium in Sheffield.

Fresh inquests last year into the deaths exonerated fans of any blame for the disaster and ruled that the 96 were unlawfully killed.

Sheila Coleman from the Hillsborough Justice Campaign told Socialist Worker, “It's welcome that there will be prosecutions. It is 27 years too late, but nevertheless it's a great example of how a grassroots campaign can forward the cause for justice.”

Justice

“It can show other campaigns, certainly that over the Grenfell Tower fire, that you should never give up. Let justice be quicker for them.”

Duckenfield was the match commander on the day of the disaster.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said, “We will allege that David Duckenfield's failures were extraordinarily bad and

contributed substantially to the deaths.”

He is charged with the manslaughter of 95 fans. The 96th, Tony Bland, suffered severe brain damage and died nearly four years later.

The CPS said it would make an application to a High Court Judge to “order that the case can proceed” over Tony's death.

Graham Mackrell, Peter Metcalf, Donald Denton, Alan Foster and Norman Bettison also face charges.

Mackrell was Sheffield Wednesday Football Club's

secretary at the time of the disaster. Peter Metcalf was South Yorkshire Police's (SYP) solicitor.

Denton was former SYP chief superintendent. Foster was former detective chief inspector. Bettison was a former SYP officer.

Mackrell faces two charges relating to alleged failures to carry out his duties as required.

Metcalf, Denton and Foster are charged with perverting the course of justice. The CPS said Metcalf “drafted an addendum statement

DAVID DUCKENFIELD (above) has been charged with manslaughter for the deaths of 95 of the 96 people who died as a result of Hillsborough disaster in 1989 (left).

and advice in respect of four South Yorkshire Police officers concerning the monitoring of pens”.

It said that Denton and Foster “ordered the amendment or alteration of accounts of South Yorkshire Police officers” relating to the disaster.

Denton provided these accounts to West Midlands Police, the force investigating SYP over the disaster, knowing that they had “been altered or amended”.

Aftermath

Bettison is charged with four offences of “misconduct in public office relating to telling alleged lies about his involvement in the aftermath of Hillsborough and the culpability of fans”.

The CPS said, “Given his role as a senior police officer, we will ask the jury to find that this was misconduct of such a degree as to amount to an abuse of the public's trust in the office holder.”

It said Bettison “untruthfully” asserted that he had “never attempted to shift blame onto the shoulders of Liverpool supporters”.

All except Duckenfield are due to appear at Warrington Magistrates' Court on 9 August.

Abortion rights victory

THE GOVERNMENT has been forced to allow women from Northern Ireland to access free abortions in England.

Previously women travelling from Northern Ireland, where abortion is illegal with few exceptions, were forced to pay for private terminations.

Labour MP Stella Creasy put an amendment on the issue which would have been discussed during a debate on the queen's speech last week.

The Tories announced that they would fund free

abortions for women from Northern Ireland to avoid being defeated in a vote.

This big concession will benefit women—just over 700 women came to England from Northern Ireland for an abortion last year.

But women in Northern Ireland still have to find the money to travel to England to access abortion services.

The 1967 Abortion Act should be extended to Northern Ireland—and we should fight for stronger abortion rights as well.

**Got a story?**Email ideas to reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Increase in acid attacks as the state sanctions Islamophobia

A white man poured acid in two Muslims' faces in a 'hate crime' in London last week—a sign that the government's anti-terror strategy is stirring up racism, writes **Tomáš Tengely-Evans**

A SERIES of acid attacks on Muslims has shown the terrible consequence of Islamophobic policies, speeches and propaganda.

At the beginning of this week police were searching for a 24 year old white man after a horrific acid attack on two Muslims in Newham, east London, last week.

Resham Khan and Jameel Muhktar were attacked while celebrating Resham's 21st birthday. A man poured acid through their car window as they waited at traffic lights in the Beckton area.

Police, who have named John Tomlin as a suspect, were not initially treating the attack as a hate crime. They now say that "following new information that has come to light, it is being treated as a hate crime".

Tomlin has shared racist posts on his Facebook page proclaiming himself "100 percent English and proud". Another post he shared urges people to "make Britain great again" and "reclaim what is rightfully ours".

Jameel said that "it's definitely a hate crime".

"I believe it was something to do with Islamophobia or maybe he's got it in for Muslims because of the things that have been going on lately," he told Channel 4 News.

There has been a rise in acid attacks in the last year. According to figures from the London Metropolitan Police the number of acid attacks has risen from 261 in 2015 to 454 in 2017.

Reports

There have been reports of further attacks in the last week alone.

One Twitter user, @BadBai, reported another acid attack in Newham last Thursday. "One of my boy's friends just got thrown in his car between Wanstead and Forest Gate," he tweeted.

"Please be careful, especially if you're brown".

There has been a report of at least one other acid attack in east London.

Politicians and right wing newspapers have been quick to offer sympathy with Resham and Jameel, with the Daily Star branding Tomlin a "sick brute".

But it is newspapers such as the Daily Star that repeatedly push racism against Muslims, smearing them as terrorist sympathisers.

Hate crimes against Muslims in both Manchester and London have surged in the wake of the horrific terrorist attacks last months.

Politicians have whipped up

Oxford



Over 200 people held a community walk against racism in Florence Park in Oxford last Sunday. It followed a reported racist attack on Somali women in the park after Eid celebrations last month. Called by Oxford Stand Up To Racism (SUTR), it was a diverse

event with Anneliese Dodds MP and several Labour and Green councillors in attendance.

A short rally at the end saw speakers call for greater unity and opposition to racism.

PICTURE: JULIE SIMMONS

Islamophobia even more after these attacks with plans for terror laws to clamp down on Muslims (see right).

This sort of state-sponsored Islamophobia from the top of society fuels attacks on the streets.

A mosque in Finsbury Park in north London received death threats following an Islamophobic attack at the beginning of this month.

Darren Osborne ploughed a van into worshippers, killing one and injuring ten, who were gathered nearby in-between prayers.

We have to stand in solidarity with the victims and demand justice for them.

It is important that the Stand Up To Racism group in Newham had planned a vigil for Resham and Jameel this Wednesday evening.

We also have to fight against the Islamophobia and racism whipped up by politicians and the press that can produce such attacks.

PREVENT STRATEGY

Racism approved by those at the top

A NEW report has called on the Tory government to come up with an official definition of racism against Muslims.

The Missing Muslims—Unlocking British Muslim Potential for the Benefit of All report was produced by a commission chaired by Tory MP Dominic Grieve.

The fact that it recognises Islamophobia is a sign of the pressure on the Tories, but it comes with a sting in the tail.

It found that Muslims feel they are "unfairly targeted". Its recommendations include reviewing the Islamophobic "Prevent" programme.

Part of the Counter Terrorism Act 2015, this forces public sector workers, such as teachers, to spy for signs of "radicalisation".

The whole Prevent programme is racist to its core—it should not be reviewed, but should be dumped immediately.

Grieve talked about the need for action to "break down barriers and bring people together."

This still plays into the racist lie that Britain is becoming more segregated, and that Muslims are living as a "nation within a nation".

The Tories are hoping to use

Islamophobia under the guise of "national unity".

Their talk is still based on dividing Muslims between "good" and "bad" Muslims.

The only good Muslims are those who meekly accept what the government is doing—and do not question British foreign policy.

This is what the narrative around "British values" is really about.

We need anti-racist unity from among working class and oppressed people, not "national unity" with the people at the top who push racism against Muslims.



Mission accomplished? Iraq's heard that before

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

THE IRAQI military said it was in the final stages of capturing the city of Mosul from Isis as Socialist Worker went to press.

Backed by US firepower and British special forces, the Iraqi army began trying to retake the northern city last October.

The “liberation” has displaced hundreds of thousands of refugees. US bombs have levelled buildings, killing hundreds, and there are widespread reports of torture and killings by sectarian Iraqi forces.

Meanwhile in Syria the US-backed, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) militia is also pushing onto Isis's de facto capital Raqqa in Syria.

If it succeeds, that operation will put Kurdish forces in charge of a predominantly Sunni Arab city.

The activist group Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently was formed originally to denounce Isis. It now reports the mass killing inflicted by the US-led air raids and says Raqqa has been facing 200 air strikes a day.

Isis, a deeply reactionary and sectarian outfit, seized control of large swathes of Iraq and Syria in 2014 as part of a self-declared “Islamic State” or “caliphate”.

Pundits have said the capture of Mosul and Raqqa would mean the end was near for Isis. But the reality is more complex.

The Iraqi government has hailed Mosul's “final liberation” numerous times in the last year.

Imperialist

Isis is under pressure as different powers turn their fire on it.

After the Syrian Revolution of 2011, dictator Bashar al-Assad's bloody war of counter-revolution created fertile ground for Isis's reactionary politics.

He also effectively surrendered much of eastern Syria to Isis in order to focus on crushing the popular revolutionary forces.

Now Assad and his closest ally Russian president Vladimir Putin have gone on the offensive.

Isis also faces internal pressures within its own territories, where its largely military rule relies heavily on the plunder of captured territories.

But that doesn't mean Isis is finished. It grew out of the misery, chaos and sectarian violence left behind by the West's war in Iraq that shattered Iraqi society.

After the US invaded Iraq in 2003, it initially faced a united opposition from both Shia and Sunni Muslims. So it turned to divide and rule.

The occupiers built a sectarian Shia state that largely neutralised Shia resistance in the south of Iraq.

For a time it also bought off many of the Sunni groups in the

DISPLACED FAMILIES flee Mosul through sniper fire

north with promises of a “national unity” government that never materialised. But once they had driven out the forerunner of Isis—Al Qaida in Iraq (AQI)—all talk of national unity was dropped.

This sectarian settlement only helped AQI to regroup, feed on the resentment—and grow again as Isis.

Today even more powers are vying for position in Iraq. None of them offer an alternative.

Having been weakened by defeat in Iraq and by the first phase of the Arab Revolutions, US imperialism is hoping to reassert its control in the Middle East.

Meanwhile Russia is backing the Assad regime partly because it gives it access to strategic assets such as the port of Tartus in the Mediterranean.

The real solution is for the sort of uprisings that swept the region in 2011. They brought masses of people together across the sectarian divide in the fight against the dictators and imperialism.

Israeli jets join the fray in Syrian war

ISRAEL STEPPED up its involvement in the war in Syria with at least three air strikes against the regime's army last week. Israeli politicians claimed the air strikes were in response to shells that landed in territory controlled by Israel.

Defence minister Avigdor Liberman said Israel had “no intention” of entering the war in Syria. But he warned forces in Syria “not to test us” and said the slightest escalation could lead to conflict.

Liberman also said he wanted to see Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, an ally of Israel's regional rival Iran, removed.

Israel and other US-backed regional powers are worried that Iran could become more influential in the Middle East if Isis is defeated in Iraq.

Israel and powerful Gulf state Saudi Arabia are trying to form a bloc against Iran.

Saudi Arabia is leading an economic blockade against neighbouring Qatar, demanding that it cut ties with Iran.

This dangerous competition between regional powers—backed by the US and Russia on each side—risks spilling over into new and more deadly wars.

What price to end the Gaza seige?

PALESTINIANS IN the besieged Gaza Strip could soon have a new, Israeli-friendly, prime minister forced on them.

Talks with Palestinian resistance group Hamas, which governs the Gaza Strip, could see Egypt opening its border with Gaza, so lifting the siege imposed by Israel.

But Egypt reportedly wants Hamas in return to accept its former bitter rival Mohammed Dahlan as prime minister.

Dahlan was in charge of the US-backed attempt to overthrow the democratically-elected party Hamas in a coup in 2007. He had to flee Gaza after his coup attempt failed.

But after more than a decade under siege, Hamas is looking for deals with regional powers to ease the pressure.

A deal with Egypt could mean an end to the siege that has made life hell for Palestinians living in Gaza.

Hamas would still be allowed to run Gaza's internal affairs.

But with Dahlan—who is quietly backed by Israel—in charge, it could also effectively end Hamas's resistance to the occupation.

Tories back Trump's raids

TORY DEFENCE secretary Michael Fallon last week committed to backing future military action by the US against the Syrian regime.

He was responding to claims by Donald Trump's White House that Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad was preparing a chemical weapons attack.

Trump threatened to bomb regime targets. His spokesperson Sean Spicer said that if Assad were to launch chemical weapons, “he and his military will pay a heavy price”.

Ater a similar US retaliation to a chemical attack in April, the heaviest price was paid by the civilians it killed.

Trump's attack didn't go ahead this time. His defence secretary James Mattis said that the threat had worked and bombs weren't needed.

But in case he ever changes his mind, Fallon gave him a blank cheque, backing any future attacks in advance.

“If the Americans take similar action again,” he said, “I want to be very clear, we will support it.”

Refuse to be tamed

ACTIVISTS FROM the “global south” hear far too often that we need to become “professional” and “management efficient”.

The only way donors will fund a human rights movement is if it becomes an NGO.

This is submission to a system that disempowers and controls the movement, despite all the slogans of “empowerment” and being “grassroots-led”.

As soon as a well-meaning group of activists starts this process, the problems begin.

First they have to sign a memorandum of agreement. Then they have to be inducted into the “good governance” model dictated by that donor.

Then an NGO has to adopt a human resource policy, finance policy, operating procedures and more.

Training programmes and meetings tell us how to act in order to continue getting funding.

In this activist-taming culture, NGOs slowly forget to engage with real people.

The grassroots people—fashionably called the “target population”—find an ever widening class gap between them and the NGO management.

International conferencing risks making you part of a conferencing club of free flights and posh hotels, only seeing your conference buddies.

You can't really say anything against the donors who have funded your trip and they know this well.

Grassroots activists, don't become corporate “professionals”. Stay raw and innocent and you will deliver much better.

Sunil Pant
LGBT+ campaigner, Nepal



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

‘Back office’ cuts had dire consequences for Grenfell

SOCIALIST WORKER is absolutely right to highlight the scandal of fire station closures and the reduction of firefighter numbers in London.

However cuts in so-called support staff also create the conditions in which a shocking tragedy such as Grenfell Tower becomes more likely.

Since 2008 the number of support staff in the London Fire Brigade, including fire safety workers, has been reduced from 1300 to 800.

These workers were cut by Boris Johnson, then London mayor, before the firefighter cuts.

The Tories perceived them to be “back office” staff and therefore politically easier to get rid of than

those seen as “frontline”.

But in the view of the Unison union branch at the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, fire safety work is “frontline” as well as firefighting.

Fire Safety Inspecting Officers (FSIOs) have been asked to increase the numbers of fire safety audits they carry out with no additional resources.

Sacrifices

Unison members have complained that this sacrifices quality to quantity and I took this up with management before last month's tragedy.

Two days after the Grenfell Tower fire, the unions received a letter from London mayor Sadiq

Khan. It warned of a “challenging” budget round in 2018-19—in other words, of yet more cuts in the fire brigade.

Even senior managers have admitted that the brigade has already been cut to the bone.

These cuts cost lives. Instead of more cuts, one of the outcomes of the inquiry into the Grenfell Tower disaster should be a significant increase in funding for fire and rescue authorities.

This needs to include a major increase in the number of FSIOs and the administrative staff who process the findings of their audits.

Tony Phillips
Branch secretary, Unison London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority

IT cuts put the burden of cyber attacks on us

I WORK for a subsidiary of the massive advertising conglomerate WPP.

A cyber attack last week brought the whole company completely offline. All our servers were down and our drives were infected with ransomware. This means the company would have to pay to access its own data.

We used to have a couple of IT workers in our workplace but they were sacked. Now all our IT is outsourced to IBM and

done remotely from India.

Trying to resolve an IT problem when you have someone in the office with you can be hard enough. But getting it done through a call centre is even harder.

It's left to workers to spend all their time chasing the issue, get passed from one part of IBM to another, and navigate the bureaucracy of a massive corporation on another continent.

Name withheld

We need socialism

ASHAMEDLY, AND in a clear reflection of my privilege, I admit it took the tragic fire in Grenfell Tower to awaken me to the urgent need for change.

I have realised I can no longer stay passive and let these injustices continue.

It has become clear to me that as long as we exist in a capitalist system, real change will be limited.

But I often struggle to imagine anything different. The other day at the



Socialists on the march

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

justice for Grenfell Tower protest I bought a copy of your paper and found that my ideals were in line with a lot of your writings.

In the past I dismissed anything with the word “socialism” involved, but I

am now very keen to learn more.

I have a growing urge to do something and I don't think it can be suffocated any longer.

Annie
by email

Just a thought...

Did you miss Tube hold-up?

YOUR COVERAGE of workplace struggles is routinely excellent.

So I was surprised that you did not cover the RMT union's ballot on London Underground failing to pass the new thresholds imposed by the Tory Trade Union Act.

This is the strongest section of the RMT's membership and the union put extensive work into winning the ballot.

I hope that you will cover the issue as you did with the loss of the Unison local government workers' ballot in Scotland.

Professor Gregor Gall
University of Bradford

Don't let the Mail bully you

NADIA SAYED is right to defy the hostile coverage of her in the Daily Mail newspaper for protesting over the Grenfell Tower fire (Letters, 27 June).

The Tory rag does not want the disaster to draw unwanted attention to the government's failings. Keep up the protests, I say!

Tracey “Roza” Mckeown
on Facebook

Were we right to vote Leave?

YOU ASK if you were right to cheer the vote to Leave the European Union (EU) last year (Socialist Worker online, 27 June).

The answer is no. The main reason people voted for Brexit was not to be anti-establishment but because of anti-immigration sentiment.

Dave Flynn
on Facebook

●THE ANSWER is yes. The EU is a neoliberal set-up and therefore not compatible with socialism.

Dominic Davidson
on Facebook

Bosses were always liars

YOU REPORT that the bosses who made a mess of Southern rail are now saying it's the trade unions' fault (Socialist Worker, 27 June).

They did the same with the shipbuilding industry—ran it into the ground then blamed the unions. We know better these days.

@rattylol
on Twitter

Six days after Edson Da Costa was arrested by armed police he was dead. Eyewitnesses say cops were “rough” with Edson and that he couldn’t breathe. His family want answers. **Sadie Robinson** investigates

AT AROUND 10pm on Thursday 15 June police stopped a car on the Woodcocks estate near Tollgate Road in Beckton, east London. Six days later a 25 year old man who had been travelling in the car was dead.

Edir Da Costa, known as Edson, was hospitalised following the police stop. His life support was switched off on 21 June.

Edson had come to Britain from Portugal in 1996 and had a two year old son here.

Residents on the Woodcocks estate spoke to Socialist Worker of their sadness at the death. Many were shocked that it seemed Edson had been fatally injured just yards from their front doors.

And there was anger among many residents—black, Asian and white—towards the police.

Troy said, “The police killed him. My dad saw what happened—they choked him to death. This happens to black people all the time.”

Lisa said, “People said the police were being rough with him and that he couldn’t breathe. It’s shocking—he was only a year younger than me. And you think the police are meant to be the ones you feel safe around.”

George added, “Everybody’s saying the police killed him—everybody.”

“It was the police,” said Rukhsana. “They were armed with big guns—why do they need that? Don’t believe what you read in the media. People saw this with their own eyes.”

Members of Edson’s family have spoken out about the injuries he suffered at the hands of the police (see box, right). Police have tried to play down his injuries—and instead paint Edson as a drug dealer.

Their pet watchdog, the IPCC, released a statement last week saying that a pathologist had removed “several packages” from Edson’s throat.

The implication is that Edson died trying to hide drugs from the cops.

But as his relatives and friends pointed out, police are trained to deal with such situations. Possessing drugs doesn’t give cops a licence to kill people.

Woodcocks residents remained critical of the cops.

Shaun said, “I heard he was trying to swallow something and they choked him. Why do that? Why not take him to hospital to get X-rayed?”

Another resident, Katy, rejected the idea that there can be any justification for Edson’s death. “They said he was a drug dealer,” she said. “But even if he was, he’s not always going to be. People grow up. He was younger than my son. It’s so sad.”

Perception

Ivan, a friend of Edson’s, added, “Edson was unarmed. Even if they thought he had a knife, they have training to deal with that.”

He added, “Police racism is nothing new to me. They killed my cousin in Portugal in the same way. It’s got to end now.”

Shaun said, “It’s disgusting what happened. It seems the police have killed someone who was 25 years old and had a two year old son.

“It’s not a good look for them is it? People haven’t got the best perception of them around here already.”

Jussara was driving the car that Edson was travelling in when it was stopped. She told Socialist Worker, “It wasn’t like Edson was by himself and we don’t know what happened. I was there and I saw it. The police killed him.”

She described how officers “sprayed” Edson with something while he was on the ground. “He started passing out and he had white foam on his mouth,” she said.

She added, “When they think someone has something in their mouth, they are supposed to allow

them to swallow it and bring them to the police station.

“If the police are not doing what they’re meant to do, why should we do what we get told? Why should we follow the law if they don’t?”

Two of Edson’s cousins, Shellin and Maria (not her real name), met the borough commander of Newham police Ian Larnder last week (see right).

They said he confirmed that police had used CS gas on Edson. They also said Larnder confirmed that no officer had at that point been suspended over Edson’s death.

Residents have added to the flowers and messages left by Edson’s friends and family at the scene of the stop. Shellin told Socialist Worker how residents had come out to share their eyewitness accounts of the stop with them—and footage of the incident.

“On the tape you can hear neighbours shouting, ‘You murdered him,’” said Shellin. “You can see someone lying on the floor. And the police officers were not uniformed.”

Maria added, “Neighbours told us police officers were on top of him. And they were telling everyone to go inside. They said police drove their car at people to try and get them to go away.”

Katy said, “There were too many police for just one incident. It was all over-dramatic.”

Unconscious

Edson’s cousin Larissa said in a statement, “It’s scenarios like this that make the youth more and more defiant against the police and authority. Just because the ‘arresting officers’ have a badge they abused their power and murdered in cold blood.”

Isaac, another Woodcocks resident, said, “It’s terrible. This is not America—this shouldn’t happen here.” Mike added, “The general consensus was that the police had been over-forceful.

“It shouldn’t have happened.” Resident Esme said, “I heard that the police treated him badly and that he was unconscious. And he was only very young. It’s not good. I hope people who saw what happened come forward because it could happen to any one of us.”

Larissa said the killing brought the entire system into question. “I will not rest until justice is served and these gangsters are put behind bars,” she said. “A system that constantly condones violence doesn’t need to be revised, it needs to be dismantled.”

All residents’ names have been changed. Support the campaign—follow #justiceForEdson and #Justice4Edson on Twitter. Donate to support the family at gofundme.com/justiceforedson

PROTESTING AT Forest Gate police station last month (left)
The street where cops stopped Edson (right)

‘There were scratches on his body. There was tape on his arms and keep them close to his body. His whole body was dry. His whole body was dry. You don’t just wake up with injuries.’

WHY COPS KILLED EDSON

POLICE COMMITTING CRIME ● DO NOT ENTER ● POLICE COMMITTING CRIME

...es all over his
...e on his eyes to try
...ed, but they were
...was swollen.
...up and have these

DID S KILL ON?

PROTESTING FOR justice for Edson in Stratford, east London, last month (right)



'It's us against the government'

A GROUP of Edson's family and friends, along with supporters, gathered outside Forest Gate police station on Tuesday of last week. Police borough commander Larnder had agreed to a meeting during a 200-strong protest the previous Sunday.

Cops initially told protesters there was no appointment—but the determination of Edson's friends and family ensured a meeting went ahead.

His cousins Shellin and Maria met with Larnder and reported back to protesters what he had said. They said he had told them that officers may use force when they feel threatened or when someone has a weapon.

But Jussara said, "They said, 'Can you come out of the car?' and he came out of the car and it was fine."

Larnder said officers may use CS gas if they feel threatened. Jussara said, "He was already down on the ground when they sprayed him."

The top cop said the stop was

carried out as part of Operation Viper. This takes officers from different boroughs, but he confirmed that one of those involved in the stop was from Newham.

Operation Viper was launched in May last year to "tackle gun crime" Newham was one of its target areas. The Metropolitan Police said police activity would include "intelligence-led stop and search".

Injuries

But there has been no suggestion that Edson or anyone else in the car had a gun. So why was the stop carried out as part of Operation Viper?

Operation Viper was previously called Operation Trident. Under Operation Trident police shot and killed Mark Duggan in 2011.

Edson's cousin Larissa said Edson's injuries included a ruptured bladder, a collapsed lung and fallen diaphragm. His relatives also said they were told Edson had lost his sight due to the amount of CS gas used.

Shellin and Maria described his injuries to Socialist Worker.

"There were scratches all over his body," said Shellin. "There was tape on his eyes to try and keep them closed, but they were dry."

"His whole body was swollen. You don't just wake up and have these injuries."

Maria said, "I wish people could have gone to the hospital and seen him. The first thing you noticed was his neck. It was triple the normal size. He had to have something to hold his head straight because his neck wasn't strong enough."

"They say the police didn't injure him. So how did that happen?"

Jussara said campaigners were determined to make sure that "next time, when someone gets arrested, this isn't going to happen again".

"We're going to get to the bottom of this," she said. "It keeps happening and it has to stop."

Maria said, "This is us against the government. We want justice."

Police's pet watchdog

THE so-called Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) is supposed to investigate police abuses of power and alleged crimes. In fact it protects the cops.

It was established in 2004 following heavy criticism of its predecessor, the Police Complaints Authority.

The IPCC is now similarly discredited after failing to seriously investigate cops—and dismissing many complaints

against them without investigation.

The IPCC is stuffed full of ex-cops. One IPCC report in 2011 confirmed that eight out of nine senior investigators were former cops, as were ten out of 27 deputy senior investigators.

It is in charge of investigating deaths in custody. Some 1,614 people have died in police custody since 1990. Not a single police officer has been convicted of any crime related to these deaths.

The IPCC, far from being independent, regularly backs up the police version of

events. It was forced to apologise to Mark Duggan's family in 2014 after falsely claiming he shot at cops before they killed him.

Cops' stop and search

A MASSIVE three quarters of young black, Asian and minority ethnic people feel police target them unfairly for stop and searches. The Criminal Justice Alliance (CJA) survey found that many people felt harassed or provoked by the cops.

And police racism is

getting worse. The CJA found that in Britain black people are six times as likely to be stopped and searched as white people. This is up from four times as likely in 2014/15.

Black and minority ethnic people overall are three times more likely to be searched than white people, up from twice as likely in 2014/15.

The CJA said this is leading to a "visceral hostility" towards police among young people. It said that, as two thirds of stops lead to no action being taken, this resentment is "understandable".

CRIME ● DO NOT ENTER ● POLICE COMMITTING CRIME ● DO NOT

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

GLASGOW Music and politics

Thu 13 Jul, 7pm,
Avant Garde,
33-44 King St,
Merchant City,
G1 5QT

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

ABERDEEN

The fightback in Scotland today

Wed 12 Jul, 6pm,
Belmont Cinema Cafe,
49 Belmont St,
AB10 1JS

BARNSELEY

Should we support Corbyn's call for more police?

Thu 13 Jul, 7pm,
YMCA, Blucher St,
S70 1AP

BRADFORD

1917 — when workers took power in Russia

Thu 13 Jul, 7pm,
Glyde House,
Little Horton Lane,
BD5 0BQ

BRIGHTON

War and sectarianism in the Middle East

Thu 13 Jul, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Ship St, BN1 1AF

BRISTOL

Should the left call for more police?

Wed 12 Jul, 7.30pm,
YHA, 14 Narrow Quay,
BS1 4QA

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

The US working class and its struggles

Wed 12 Jul, 7.30pm,
Red Triangle Cafe,
160 St James's St,
BB11 1NR

CAMBRIDGE

How can our movement kick out the Tories?

Thu 13 Jul, 7.30pm,
River Lane Centre,
River Lane,
CB5 8HP

CARDIFF

How do we get rid of the Tories?

Wed 12 Jul, 7.30pm,
Cathays Community Centre,
Cathays Terrace,
CF24 4HX

CHESTERFIELD

Who are the DUP? A brief history of hate

Thu 13 Jul, 7.30pm,
Chesterfield Library,
New Beetwell St,
S40 1QN

COVENTRY

Jeremy Corbyn, Labour and the fight for socialism

Wed 12 Jul, 7.30pm,
West Indian Centre,
159 Spon St,
CV1 3BB

DERBY

Bring down the borders — why we oppose all immigration controls

Thu 13 Jul, 7pm,
West End Community Centre,
Mackworth Rd (next to Britannia Mill),
DE22 3BL

DONCASTER

Does Corbynism mean the death of austerity?

Wed 12 Jul, 7.30pm,
The Womens Centre (Changing Lives),
5 Princes St,
DN1 3NJ

DUNDEE

How do we bring down the Tories?

Wed 12 Jul, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd,
DD1 1LL



Workers strike for higher pay

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

What would socialism look like?

BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham LGBT Centre
38/40 Holloway Circus,
B1 1EQ

BOLTON

Thu 13 Jul, 7pm,
Bolton Socialist Club,
16 Wood St, BL1 1DY

HARLOW

Thu 13 Jul, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
1 Church Leys, CM18 6BX

LANCASTER

Thu 13 Jul, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Meeting House Lane,
LA1 1TX

LONDON: BRIXTON

Wed 12 Jul, 7pm,
Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Rd (near Effra Rd,
facing Windrush Square),
SW2 1EP

MANCHESTER: CHORLTON

Wed 12 Jul, 7.30pm,
Chorlton Central Church
(Meeting Room),
Barlow Moor Rd,
M21 8BF

MANCHESTER: LONGSIGHT AND LEVENSHULME

Thu 13 Jul, 7.30pm,
Inspire,
747 Stockport Rd,
M19 3AR

NEWCASTLE

Thu 13 Jul, 7pm,
Broadacre House,
Market St,
NE1 6HQ

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

Thu 13 Jul, 7pm,
Central United Reformed Church,
60 Norfolk St
(near Crucible Theatre),
S1 2JB

SOUTHAMPTON

Wed 12 Jul, 7.30pm,
Central Baptist Church Hall,
Devonshire Rd,
SO15 2GY

TELFORD

Thu 20 Jul, 7.30pm,
Carriages,
The Parade,
Wellington,
TF1 1PY

WIGAN

Wed 12 Jul, 7pm,
Little Fifteen pub,
17-19 Wallgate (opposite
Wigan Post Office),
WN1 1LD

EDINBURGH

What are the origins of racism?

Wed 12 Jul, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St, EH1 2JL

EXETER

Trade unions, the struggle against austerity and revolutionaries

Thu 13 Jul, 6.30pm,
Exeter Community Centre,
17 St Davids Hill,
EX4 3RG

HUDDERSFIELD

Who are the DUP? A brief history of hate

Wed 12 Jul, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade.
HD1 5JP

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Building the resistance

Thu 13 Jul, 7pm,
The Swarthmore
Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

LEICESTER

No justice, no peace — can Corbyn make a difference?

Wed 12 Jul, 7pm,
Leicester LGBT Centre,
15 Wellington St,
LE1 6HH

LONDON: BRENT AND HARROW

Who are the DUP? A brief history of hate

Thu 13 Jul, 7.30pm,
The Pepperpot Centre,
1a Thorpe Close,
Ladbroke Grove,
W10 5XL

LONDON: CENTRAL

Who are the DUP? A brief history of hate

Thu 13 Jul, 6.30pm,
Room 130, UCL,
Foster Court Building,
WC1E 6BT

LONDON: EALING

After the Grenfell fire — how can we fight for justice?

Thu 13 Jul, 7.30pm,
Y Lounge,
YMCA West London,
25 St Mary's Rd,
W5 2RE

LONDON: HACKNEY

After the Grenfell fire — how can we fight for justice?

Thu 13 Jul, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner
Lower Clapton Rd),
E5 0PU

LONDON: HARINGEY

Human nature — is it a barrier to socialism?

Wed 12 Jul, 7.30pm,
St John Vianney Church Hall,
386 West Green Rd
(corner Vincent Rd),
N15 3QH

LONDON: ISLINGTON

How can the left shape Brexit?

Thu 13 Jul, 7pm,
The Old Fire Station,
84 Mayton St,
N7 6QT

LONDON: LEWISHAM

Can there be a revolution in Britain?

Thu 13 Jul, 7.30pm,
West Greenwich Community
and Arts Centre,
141 Greenwich High Rd
(near Greenwich main
line and DLR station),
SE10 8JA

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

The Marikana massacre and the crisis in South African politics

Wed 12 Jul, 7pm,
Oxford House,
Derbyshire St (opposite
Bethnal Green Rd Tesco),
E2 6HG

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Can there be a revolution in Britain?

Wed 12 Jul, 7.30pm,
William Morris
Community Centre,
6-8 Greenleaf Rd, E17 6QQ

MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE

Deliveroo, Uber and the gig economy — what's happening to the working class?

Thu 13 Jul, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St, M2 5NS

MEDWAY

The hidden crisis — how do we stop climate change?

Thu 13 Jul, 7.30pm,
Nucleus Arts Centre
(Conference Room),
272 High St,
ME4 4BP

NORWICH

Can socialism come through parliament?

Thu 13 Jul, 7.30pm,
Vauxhall Centre,
Johnson Place,
NR2 2SA

NOTTINGHAM

Is Marxist economics still valid today?

Wed 12 Jul, 7.30pm,
International
Community Centre,
61b Mansfield Rd,
NG1 3FN

OXFORD

After the Grenfell fire — how can we fight for justice?

Wed 12 Jul, 7.30pm,
Restore,
Manzil Way (off Cowley Rd),
OX4 1YH

PLYMOUTH

After the Grenfell fire — how can we fight for justice?

Wed 12 Jul, 7pm,
Quaker House,
74 Mutley Plain,
PL4 6LF

POOLE AND DORCHESTER

Northern Ireland — Britain's oldest colony

Mon 10 Jul, 7.15pm,
Goldies Public House,
36 High E St,
DT1 1HN

PORTSMOUTH

Marxism in Britain today

Wed 12 Jul, 7.30pm,
Somerstown
Community Centre,
River's St,
PO5 4EZ

SCARBOROUGH

Do we want universal basic income?

Wed 12 Jul, 7.30pm,
Tap and Spile,
94 Falsgrave Rd,
YO12 5AZ

SWANSEA

The Russian Revolution 100 years on — winning workers' power

Thu 13 Jul, 7.30pm,
Brynmill Community Centre,
St Albans Rd,
SA2 0BP

Breakfast in red

Wake up to Socialist Worker in your inbox every morning.

Sign up to our morning newsletter 'Breakfast in red' and get a fresh article every day.

For news and analysis on the stories that matter go to:
socialistworker.co.uk/subscribe

CONTACT THE SWP

Phone 020 7840 5600
Email
enquires@swp.org.uk
Post PO Box 71327,
London SE11 9BW

Alone in Berlin shows the significance of small acts

Based on Hans Fallada's tale of resisting the Nazis, this new film is more limited than the novel but has a powerful message at its heart, writes **Sophia Beach**

DIRECTOR VINCENT Perez's latest film brings Hans Fallada's novel *Alone in Berlin* to the screen.

Written in 1947, Fallada's book was inspired by the admirable and brave actions of a working class couple, Otto and Elise Hampel. They actively opposed the Nazi regime between 1940 and '43.

The film follows protagonists Otto and Anna Quangel whose only son dies during the invasion of France in 1940.

After that the couple, played commendably by Emma Thompson and Brendan Gleeson, commit individual acts of resistance.

They write postcards encouraging people to defy the Nazi regime and distribute them throughout office blocks in Berlin.

Alone in Berlin lingers over the small details of everyday life.

At times this is very effective, such as the sensory use of touch, the gripping of a bannister or the stroking of a face.

Inhumanity

It's this attention to the details of the mundane and ordinary that contrasts with the inhumanity of Nazi rule. But this can sometimes be at the expense of the pace and suspense.

The film is somewhat restricted because it's limited to a handful of characters, most of whom aren't developed in the way that they are in the book.

And yet, despite this closeness, the film does not gather any speed or build tension in the way that one might hope.

Nevertheless, the opening scene provides a strong emotional charge on the horror and loneliness of war.



BRENDAN GLEESON and Emma Thompson give strong performances in *Alone in Berlin*

This makes an implicit reference to the title of the book, and even more so to its original name *Every Man Dies Alone*.

With its focus on the lives of two working class middle-aged Berliners, the film also gives a more unusual perspective than most films set in wartime Germany.

The film resonates with Fallada's sense of optimism that somehow small, individual acts can bring about change.

The ending of the film appears

somewhat contrived for the audience's benefit, as it seeks to reassure us that the Quangels' mission was not futile.

Despite this it raises important points that are relevant today.

Postcards

Otto's postcards become increasingly political throughout the film, focusing on the freedom of the press and the importance of challenging dominant power structures.

This resonates with the rise of

right wing populism and the advent of "fake news".

The actions of the Quangels, although limited in their scope, have an important message.

It is acts of resistance, however small, that are significant, particularly in disenfranchised times.

As Otto says in the film, all small acts of defiance contribute to "the sand in the machine".

Alone in Berlin

Directed by Vincent Perez

On general release now

How can we solve the crisis and win decent homes?

BOOKS

THERE'S NO PLACE—THE AMERICAN HOUSING CRISIS AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE UK

Glyn Robbins, £10, Red Roof

BIG CAPITAL

Anna Minton, £8.99, Penguin

TWO NEW books look at the housing crisis from different perspectives.

The authors, Anna Minton and Glyn Robbins, spoke to *Socialist Worker* about the struggle for decent housing.

One of the focuses of Robbins' book is

tenant organisation and resistance.

Minton's book is more descriptive, and describes top-down models seen in Europe as potential solutions.

Robbins said, "Council housing is the safest and most secure type of housing we have in this country."

More and more people are privately renting. This raises a question of organisation.

"How can we bring all the campaigns together?" asked Minton, arguing that proper "funding for organisations" could be one solution.

"We need to unite



Glyn Robbins and Anna Minton

across tenures," argued Robbins. "Leaseholders can be a part of the movement.

"It's frustrating that trade unions aren't taking housing campaigns more seriously."

The authors debated the role of councils.

"It's scandalous that any council of any political hue is demolishing estates. I don't think that apologising for councils for political reasons is helpful," said Robbins.

"A lot of councils pushing through

redevelopments are Labour Blairite councils," said Minton.

But at the same time, argued Robbins, "There's a problem with letting the government off the hook by focusing on councils."

Both books tackle the role of the market.

"Across the country big capital is trying to acquire big chunks of land," said Robbins. "The problem is, people live there. If they could, they'd treat the estates in London like a favela, they'd clear it."

Alistair Farrow

FILM

DISPOSSESSION

On tour at cinemas across Britain until August. For a list of showings go to dispossessionfilm.com

SELDOM HAS a film had a more timely release.

There have been several films lately which tackle the subject of social housing, but this is by far the most professional.

The film starts by asking the question, "How come we are one of the richest nations in the world, but we can't house ordinary people in a way that respects their humanity?"

You should go along to a local showing of the film and get in touch with local campaigners.

Longer at socialistworker.co.uk

NEW BOOKS AT MARXISM 2017

BOOKMARKS, THE socialist bookshop will be inside the Marxism 2017 festival in central London this weekend.

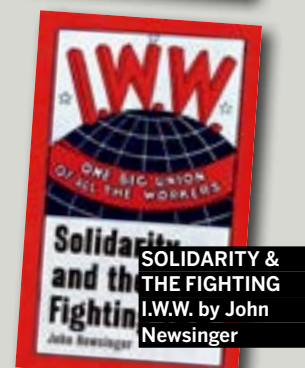
Among the thousands of titles on offer are three books newly released at Marxism:



LENIN FOR TODAY
by John Molyneux



READER'S GUIDE TO
MARX'S CAPITAL
by Joseph Choonara



SOLIDARITY & THE FIGHTING
I.W.W. by John Newsinger

Find out more at marxismfestival.org.uk and bookmarksbookshop.co.uk

THE RIGHT is ramping up attempts to restrict, repress and deny our sexuality.

An emboldened Christian right in the US is going after abortion rights. Pouring sexist scorn on a woman's right to choose, Republican politician Justin Humphrey recently said he thought of women as a "host".

Attacking LGBT+ people's rights such as equal marriage is a major touchstone of the right from France to Poland.

Some have pointed to parallels with Channel 4's adaptation of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* to this modern day bigotry.

In its right wing Christian regime, all women have been forced back into the home.

Sex is purely for procreation with some women, known as handmaids, forced to live for no other reason.

The right are serious about their worldview. They think that marriage should be between a man and a woman.

Abstinence is the best sort of sex education, and if a woman becomes pregnant god forbid she has an abortion.

Yet mainstream liberal responses also don't get where their bigotry comes from.

Just like the religious right itself, many see these oppressive ideas coming directly from ancient scriptures.

But restricting women's rights and dictating sexual morality are part of modern capitalist society.

Women's oppression is inbuilt into the inequality of capitalism, which represses and distorts everyone's sexuality.

Religious ideas around sexuality, like all ideas, are products of material circumstances. They aren't static, but have been shaped by how society has changed throughout history.

In the Catholic Church, celibacy prohibits members of the clergy from marriage and sexual relations.

Religious leaders argue this is a time-old holy rule with the previous Pope claiming he knew it came from the Bible's book of Matthew.

Preachers

But the early Christian faith allowed its preachers to have sex. One branch, known as Gnostic Christianity, allowed its followers to engage in free love.

As Christianity developed from a faith of oppressed people within the Roman Empire into its official religion this changed.

These rules have been shaped by class society and the needs of the ruling class.

Underlying them is the idea that sex is not about having fun or intimacy, but procreation.

Of course people have done all sorts of things sexually throughout history, but what's officially permissible has changed.

PROTESTERS AND activists march in Los Angeles for Pride. We need politics on pride to defeat the right's attacks on our sexuality

WHY DOES THE RIGHT HATE SEX?

Right wingers have always hated women and LGBT+ people—and it's because of the capitalist system that wants to control our sexuality, argues Tomáš Tengely-Evans

A Pro-choice protest

As humans aren't restricted to a "mating season", we developed with the ability to have sex for pleasure, not just procreation.

Before class society, where the majority produce for a minority at the top, people's lives weren't based around defined work hours.

More free time meant humans could have a much larger range of relationships.

But the rise of class society led to the oppression of women



Capitalism represses and distorts everyone's sexuality

and distorted and repressed sexuality.

This has been shaped by how production has been organised, and the key institution within society regulating sexuality has been the family.

In ancient Roman society production was based around a slave economy, which meant the family unit was less important.

But during the Middle Ages "feudal" production was based around the family so the idea

of sex for procreation became more important.

For the ruling class the regulation of sex was also important for defining who was a "legitimate" child and who could inherit wealth and land.

CHRISTIANITY was used by the ruling class to push its own ideas around sexual morality and the church took on a bigger role within marriages and society in general.

These ideas, which suited the needs of the ruling class, were driven right through society from the top.

Sex outside of marriage was a sin, but a whole set of rules for married couples were also developed.

They went right down to what days people were allowed to have sex and what positions were acceptable.

So oral sex, sex standing up, or women on top were all out. Sex on a religious holiday? Forget it.

That's because the church ruled that this would be less, or not at all, likely to lead to pregnancy. Some of this carries on in a section of the US Christian right's more bizarre scaremongering about masturbation today.

Capitalism swept away many of the old feudal institutions because they got in the way of making profits. Unlike feudalism, capitalism was based on mass factory production not around the family unit.

This meant it initially challenged many of the religious ideas that had been used to justify the old order.

But capital also adapted and reinvented some of these religious ideas for its own needs.

Many of the rules under capitalism focused on regulating middle class sexual morality.

By pushing large numbers of men, women and children into factories, the working class family began breaking apart.

Workers

Capitalists still needed a new generation of workers, but it wasn't a simple process just pushed down from the top.

This was because many working class people also wanted a refuge from the drudgery of the factory.

There's still a sense that the family and monogamy provide that security and stability.

The new "nuclear family" was modelled on the capitalist family with a separation between work and the home.

The capitalist press slammed factories and mines as dens of iniquity and legislation was brought in to stop women working in them.

Responsibility for looking after children was pushed into the home as women's responsibility.

This reinforced the idea that sex is for procreation not for fun, denying women sexual

agency. A whole new set of rules were pushed to regulate working class sexuality.

Abortion was banned. The term “homosexuality” was first used and laws against it were brought in. That’s because same sex relationships seemed to threaten the ideas of the nuclear family and sex for procreation.

Often Protestant religious doctrine took over from the old Catholic one to justify this.

Marriage and the family have undergone big changes, but remain resilient.

Today Channel 4’s programme Married At First Sight is a far cry from the medieval rules about what positions were allowed. The programme brings together an array of relationship counsellors, psychologists—and a priest to boot.

Through supposedly scientific methods, such as testing a person’s “nesting gene”, this team pairs two total strangers together.

Marriage

These strangers only meet on their wedding day and then are encouraged to “make it work”.

Marriage as a way of settling down and “making a home” is still held to be the ultimate aim and route to happiness.

This also points to the much broader ideas of sexuality within society.

Mass movements for women’s and LGBT+ rights in the 1960s have forced concessions from the ruling class. Capital still needed the nuclear family, but it had to respond and adapt to these changes.

As the mass movements of the 1960s ebbed, sometimes the right assaulted the gains.

In 1988 the Tories brought in Section 28 of the Local Government Act that banned the “promotion” of homosexuality in schools.

Widespread opposition pushed it back. Then in 2013 another former Tory prime minister—David Cameron—brought in equal marriage, and spun it as “family values”.

This also shows how capitalism tries to repackage the gains for sexual liberation we have made. Pornography and strip clubs are marketed as a sign of women’s sexual expression.

But implicit in both is that sex is something done to women, not something that they have agency or pleasure in.

Capitalism tries to make



The right has recently been emboldened (top) but activists are united against bigotry (above)



Women are enslaved to breed in *The Handmaid's Tale*

everything into a commodity to be bought and sold, including our sexuality.

In relationships the other person is seen as the object of one’s desires, rather than a human equal.

The right hate the notion of sex for pleasure, intimacy and fun between equal subjects.

And although capital might not always want to push that hatred, a popular base has built up around these ideas.

Trump wasn’t always interested in restricting abortion rights, but he used it to win right wing support.

We are for people having more fulfilling sexual relationships. For that we have to uproot the class-ridden society to bring genuine, lasting sexual freedom.

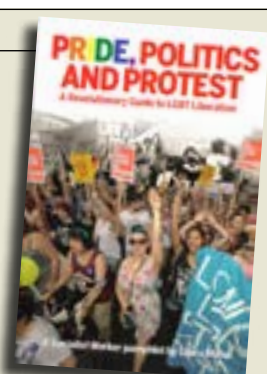
READ MORE

● **Pride, Politics and Protest—a revolutionary guide to LGBT liberation**
by Laura Miles
£3.00

● **Marxism and Women's Liberation**
by Judith Orr
£9.99

● **Marx on Gender and the Family (Historical Materialism)**
by Heather Brown
£21.99

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop.
Phone 020 7637 1848
or go to
bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



Workers’ revolution ushered in an era of sexual liberation

For the rights of LGBT+ people and women, revolutionary Russia was decades ahead of its time—and shows what is possible

IN 1917 Russia saw a workers’ revolution that transformed society—including by bringing about a sexual revolution.

Under the rule of the despotic Tsars, homosexuality was illegal. Gay men and women constantly faced risk of punishment.

For those with wealth, circumstances were much safer. Wealthy lesbians could meet in sophisticated coffee clubs and the upper classes were able to have safer, more discreet relationships.

But as for working class gay men and women, they would often only be able to meet at brothels.

Sexual oppression was long engrained in Russian society. Alongside the illegality of homosexuality, women were oppressed as domestic slaves.

But during the revolution, in October 1917, homosexuality was legalised.

The Soviet government also abolished bans on civil and political rights such as state employment for homosexuals.

Georgy Chicherin, an openly gay man, was named People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs in 1918.

Natural

In 1923 the leading Bolshevik Grigori Batkis published a report called *The Sexual Revolution in Russia*, stating that homosexuality was “perfectly natural”.

It explained that Soviet law “declares the absolute non-involvement of state and society in sexual relations provided they harm no one and infringe upon no one’s interests”.

Two women who married secretly before the revolution had their union recognised.

People found a new sexual freedom without fear of state punishment and it drastically changed their lives.

There were still debates about homosexuality. But revolutionary Russia



RUSSIAN POSTER from 1918

1917 TIMELINE

On 21 June (4 July by the modern calendar)

- Starving workers at the Putilov factory go on strike
- Soldiers demand to be sent home to plough fields
- The Bolsheviks are urged to immediately overthrow the government, but they need wider support first

was decades ahead of its time.

It was a far cry from the often deadly discrimination and persecution that LGBT+ people still face even today.

When the revolution was rolled back, so was the sexual liberation it had brought.

The Bolsheviks held off attempts by the old ruling class and the imperialist powers to reconquer Russia.

But civil war decimated the working class and weakened the foundations of socialism.

Josef Stalin staged a counter-revolution from within, and used state control to develop capitalism in Russia.

The loss of the revolution

“**People found a new sexual freedom without fear of punishments**”

was felt hard.

Sexism and homophobia, along with the institution of the nuclear family, are part of how capitalism controls the working class.

Stalin’s state capitalism was no exception.

Women were forced back into domestic servitude.

Homosexuality was once again criminalised in 1933. In 1934 male homosexuality in Russia was made punishable by five years hard labour.

It remained a serious criminal offence until 1993. Homophobic repression is rampant in Russia today.

Leap

But for a time, a century ago, there was a massive leap forward for LGBT+ and sexual liberation.

It is no coincidence that this occurred during a massive workers’ uprising. As leading Bolshevik Vladimir Lenin wrote, “Revolutions are the festivals of the oppressed and the exploited.”

The Bolsheviks understood that sexual liberation and socialism were irrevocably intertwined.

In order to unite against their rulers, workers must confront all forms of oppression. And when ordinary people take control of their lives a society without oppression becomes possible.

The gains made in 1917 show that sexual liberation is possible—through socialist revolution.

This is part of a series of weekly articles on the Russian Revolution. Read our coverage at tinyurl.com/sw1917

Marxism 2017 Ideas for a world in turmoil

6-9 July
A four day
political
festival

Student
Central,
London
WC1E 7HY

Hosted by
the Socialist
Workers
Party

 marxismfestival.org.uk  @marxismfest

Themes include:

- Where next after the general election?
- Jeremy Corbyn, Labour and the fight for socialism
- Donald Trump, the US and the fightback
- Racism and resistance
- Challenging women's and LGBT+ oppression
- War, imperialism, the Middle East and Palestine



Speakers include:

- Michael Roberts on The Long Depression
- Ian Angus on climate change
- Sheila Coleman on Hillsborough, Orgreave and state cover ups
- Susan Rosenthal on Eugenics today
- Alex Callinicos on Trump and the crisis of neoliberalism
- Pat Mills on the politics of 2000AD

JOIN THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

☐ Yes, I'd like to be a member

☐ Please send me some information

Name

Address

Postcode

Phone

Email

Return to SWP membership department, PO Box 71327, London SE11 9BW. **Phone** 020 7840 5602

Email membership@swp.org.uk



Subscribe to Socialist Worker

Have Socialist Worker delivered with your post every week for a direct debit of £5 a month

I want to subscribe to Socialist Worker with a monthly direct debit of £5

Name

Address.....

Postcode

E-mail

Phone

I would like ____ extra papers to sell (this will not be deducted from my bank account)

For official use only—this is not part of the instructions to your bank/building society

Sherborne Publications,
PO Box 71327 London SE11 9BW

Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by direct debit

Originator identification no. 9 7 3 3 5 5

Our reference no.

1. Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

To the manager:

Bank/building society

Address

Postcode

2. Name(s) of account holder(s)

3. Branch sort code / /

4. Bank/building society account no.

5. Instruction to your bank or building society

Please pay Sherborne Publications direct debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the direct debit guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Sherborne Publications and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank or building society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions from some types of account

Direct debit guarantee

■ This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.

■ If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit Sherborne Publications will notify you ten working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request Sherborne Publications to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.

■ If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by Sherborne Publications or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.

■ If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when Sherborne Publications asks you to.

■ You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

Socialist Worker Subscriptions

Post PO Box 71327, London SE11 9BW

Phone 020 7840 5601

Web www.socialistworker.co.uk

The threat of a new racist movement on the streets

After thousands join a march with anti-Muslim speeches, called by the ‘Football Lads Alliance’, Raymie Kiernan looks at who is behind it, what they are doing—and how to stop them

IN A worrying development, the Football Lads Alliance (FLA) brought thousands out on London’s streets on Saturday 24 June to “unite against extremism”.

The increase in Islamophobia from the mainstream media and politicians created the conditions for such a large turnout.

People had come with different expectations of what they were attending. But it was a mobilisation which ended with right wing and racist speeches against Islam.

Known fascists attended—seeking to build their influence—and some Nazis celebrated the mobilisation.

But the march was built among wide layers of people, and not necessarily with racist appeals. That indicates there are softer elements on the periphery of this movement.

Echoes

This echoes some of the early mobilisations eight years ago that led to the formation of the English Defence League (EDL).

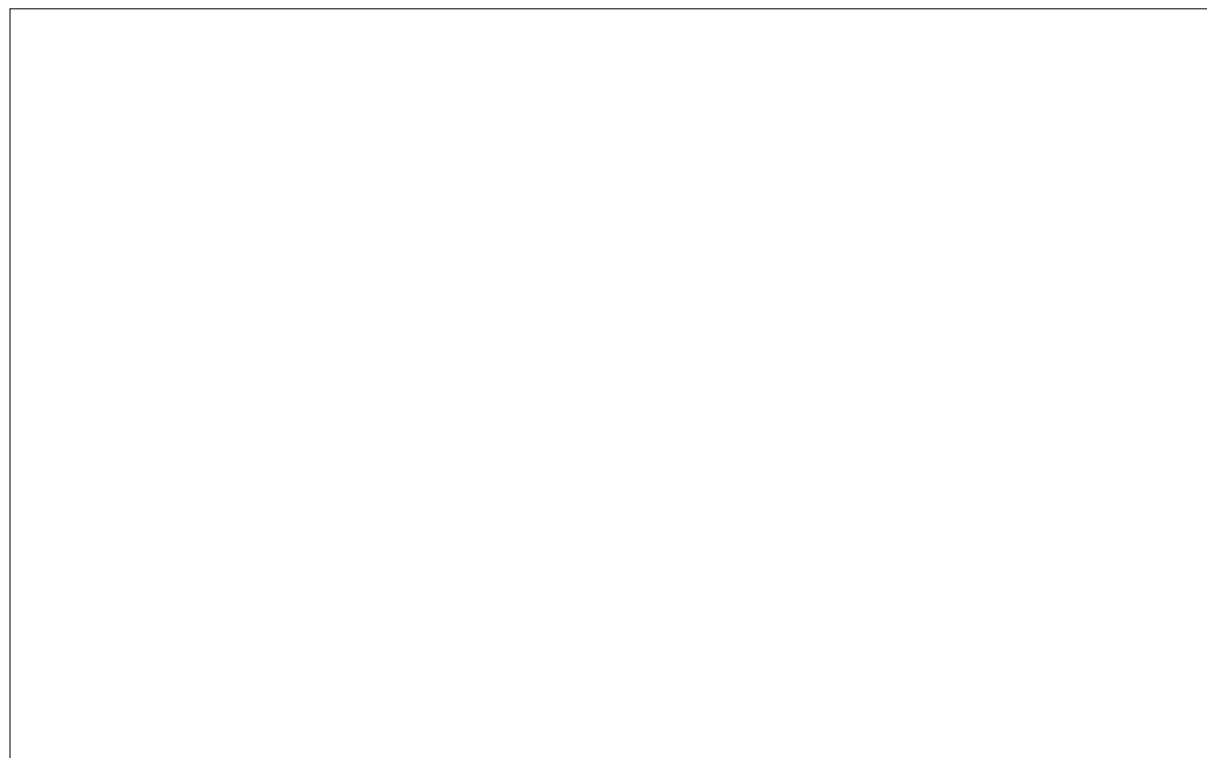
The EDL started with similar racist appeals about “Islamic extremism” and used sections of organised football supporters.

Some of its marches attracted an audience from beyond the ranks of the far right. But opposition wore it down to a hard core.

By pointing out to softer elements of the FLA that they are being used by fascists, opposition can drive a wedge into this new right wing movement to split it too.

FLA founder John Meighan was interviewed by a right wing blog last week.

This blog calls fascist former EDL leader Tommy Robinson “a very knowledgeable man who speaks articulately and informatively about the religion of Islam”. Robinson



ON THE “United against extremism” march called by the “Football Lads Alliance”

called the Quran a “violent and cursed book”.

Meighan was clear what the focus of the FLA should be.

He said, “We’re talking about radical Islamic extremism” and listed terrorist attacks carried out by Muslims—the murder of Lee Rigby, the 7/7 bombings in London, Westminster Bridge, London Bridge and the Manchester bombing.

His solution is “looking at terror laws and preachers of hate”. He thinks that “you can’t watch them all” so advocates electronic tagging or “some form of confinement”.

This is thin cover for Islamophobia.

Meighan’s “anti-extremism” interview did not mention Finsbury Park mosque attacker Darren Osborne or the murder of Jo Cox MP by a Nazi sympathiser.

And the march’s line-up included speeches on Islamophobic themes quite separate to terrorism (see below).

Its organisers appear to have learned from the EDL’s decline to make their appearance more respectable.

Meighan argued that “flags, chanting, drinking on the streets” only “gives the press a stick to beat you with”. He said the FLA will operate

“not in a violent or aggressive way”—though his own history of violent street brawls undermines this.

The FLA represents a dangerously fertile breeding ground for fascists—and a danger in its own right.

The left has grown hugely in confidence in Britain in recent weeks. But as the populist racist Ukip party implodes electorally a portion of its audience is open to the far right.

The left and all Jeremy Corbyn supporters can’t ignore such developments.

We need to continue to build and strengthen UAF

How we can beat the thugs

THE GROWTH of street movements such as the EDL show how rapidly things can move—but also how the threat from such groups can be countered.

It remains to be seen how the FLA will develop. But there are already signs of tensions, not only between the hooligan firms more at home fighting each other on



English Defence League “protesters” in 2009

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

a Saturday afternoon, but also about the direction it goes in.

Will it still try to appear “respectable” or will the overtly racist wing win out?

Anti-racists need to take the FLA seriously. It must be opposed.

Fan groups at clubs can play an important role in spreading the anti-racist message around football grounds.

Fanzines, most of them left wing, could expose the FLA’s dangers.

Statements from players can back this up.

Rally puts sectarians and xenophobes centre stage

THE FLA organisers’ claims their march was anti-racist were blown apart by giving a platform to the likes of Toni Bugle to push an openly Islamophobic agenda.

The EDL supporter formed anti-Muslim group Mothers Against Radical Islam And Sharia. She was a Police and Crime Commissioner candidate for the far right English Democrats.

She blamed “Muslim grooming gangs” for child sexual abuse and

railed against “politically correct pandering to one community over the rest of us”.

Parroting

Mohan Singh from the Sikh Awareness Society also spoke. He has come to prominence by parroting the lies whipped up by politicians and the media that Muslims are child abusers.

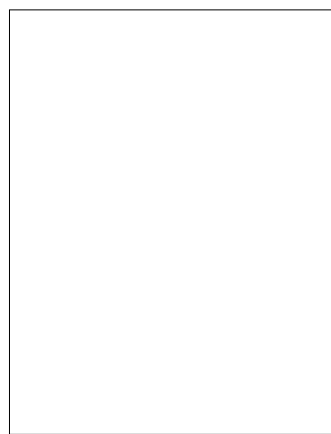
He did condemn the Finsbury Park attack, but the sectarian focus of his speech was “radical Islamic

terrorism”. To cheers from large parts of the crowd he argued that the “biggest stumbling block is political correctness.

“If we can’t identify the enemy haven’t we already lost?”

Referring to recent terror attacks he added, “What we’ve seen in the last three months is the tip of the iceberg.

“We’ve got to go down and root these people out.” He called for “a blacklist of foreign home-grown imams and



EDL supporter Toni Bugle

other political leaders” who “threaten morality or public order”.

It would have gone down well with the former EDL and Combat 18 thugs, and others from the dwindling band of the Nazi British National Party, known to have been on the march.

As the Unite Against Fascism campaign reports, “Fascist individuals were not open about their politics but clearly may sense fresh opportunities.”

IN BRIEF

Protesters block fracking lorries

ANTI-FRACKING protesters began camping near a factory in Clay Cross, Derbyshire, last week.

They are trying to block equipment being delivered to Cuadrilla's fracking operation in Lancashire.

They have blocked and climbed on lorries leaving Marriot PR Drilling in Coney Green business park, causing severe delays.

Louise told Socialist Worker she was there to stop the lorries because of the environmental impact of fracking.

"It's dirty and disgusting—we have to use renewables instead."

Kai Hodge

●More at socialistworker.co.uk

Councillors join Cuadrilla protest

RESIDENTS AND councillors in Lancashire have locked themselves to heavy objects outside the Preston New Road fracking site in Lancashire.

They are trying to block the drilling rig from being delivered.

There have been protests outside the Cuadrilla fracking firm's site since January.

Lancashire council voted against allowing Cuadrilla to drill two years ago.

But Tory communities secretary Sajid Javid overruled the council's decision.

Bank of England workers to strike

WORKERS AT the Bank of England are set to strike for four days from 31 July.

The Unite union members voted overwhelmingly to strike against a real terms pay cut.

They include cleaners, maintenance and security workers.

Tories want fresh cuts to fire service

THE FBU firefighters' union has slammed fresh cuts to the fire service.

The union demanded that the Tories halt fire service cuts and reinstate firefighter jobs that have already been scrapped.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack warned, "We have already seen the worst cuts in the history of the fire service but more are on the way."

FBU members in Surrey passed a motion of no confidence in Surrey County Council last week as Tory council bosses plan to slash £10 million from its fire service budget.

The Grenfell Tower fire last month drew attention to the cuts that have left fire services across Britain struggling.

Strikes could resist the cuts and help kick the Tories out.

BIN WORKERS

Calling out council's trash

REFUSE WORKERS struck across Birmingham for almost five hours last Friday and for two hours on Monday.

The Unite union members are fighting 122 redundancies and other attacks as part of a restructuring scheme.

Their walkout was solid at all the four depots and workers in the Unison union respected picket lines.

The Labour-run council wants to move from a

four-day to a five-day week with 113 workers being downgraded and losing overtime.

Pickets at Redfern Road depot explained that some workers could lose up to £4,000 a year.

Workers are determined to resist. They voted by 90 percent for strikes.

They plan four more strikes with the next on Tuesday of next week.

Bob Moloney



BIRMINGHAM BIN workers aren't taking any rubbish from the council

PICTURE: BOB MOLONEY

CINEMA WORKERS

Picturehouse strikers defy attacks on union

by **ALISTAIR FARROW**

BOSSSES AT the Picturehouse cinema chain may have thought that victimising trade unionists would take the wind out of workers' sails.

But their attacks have been met with more resistance.

Workers at five Picturehouse cinemas in London struck for the London Living Wage of £9.75 and maternity, paternity and sick pay last Saturday.

It was the latest walkout by the members of the Bectu section of the Prospect union in their long-running dispute.

After joining the People's Assembly demonstration in central London, they travelled to the Ritzy cinema.

"For every single rep they

sack, another will pop up, in their place," one of the new Ritzy reps told Socialist Worker.

"We will not be intimidated."

Three reps have been sacked at the Ritzy cinema in Brixton, south London.

A fourth rep is due to hear the outcome of their disciplinary hearing.

Victimising

Labour shadow chancellor John McDonnell spoke to the rally in Brixton about how bosses have been victimising workers for centuries.

Other speakers included local Labour MP Helen Hayes and Guardian newspaper columnist Owen Jones.

People from the areas

around the cinemas have been holding "community pickets" to support the dispute.

At the Ritzy people held nightly protests over the last week, with more planned every night in the coming week between 5.30pm and 7pm.

Similar protests have happened at the Hackney and Crouch End sites.

Another strike is set to go ahead on Friday of next week, with a rally at the Crouch End site at 5pm.

One rep told Socialist Worker. "The bosses are getting really dirty and it can go one of two ways.

"Either we keep the pressure up or we can get our heads down—but that's never going to happen."

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Reject offer in Durham

DURHAM teaching assistants' (TAs) ballot over a new pay offer from Labour-run Durham County Council closes next Monday.

The vast majority are Unison union members.

Unison has said the offer is "a significant improvement on what has been offered previously".

But the last "offer" was a sign or be sacked ultimatum imposing new contracts to work more hours for a pay cut of up to 23 percent.

Four solid walkouts last year forced council bosses to suspend the sacking threat.

TAs are furious that the new council offer would still see 22 percent of them paid less. They would also work longer.

TAs should reject the offer and demand Unison names new strike dates to focus the minds of their employers.

They still have a live ballot.

SOCIAL WORKERS

Fight over unsocial work

SOCIAL WORKERS at Kirklees Council in West Yorkshire were set to strike on Wednesday and Thursday this week. The Unison union members working in children's services are in a long-running dispute.

Their grievances include pay, workloads, agency staff, allegations of bullying, IT systems, accommodation and travel plans.

Unison members have welcomed the council's announcement that children's services will remain in house.

But they are not prepared to drop their demands.

They plan to rally on the first strike day to discuss further action if required.

●Donate to the strike fund and send solidarity messages via branch@kirklees-unison.org.uk

ROYAL MAIL

Delivering on resistance

ROYAL MAIL bosses want to force through massive attacks on postal workers' pensions, pay and conditions.

But CWU union members are gearing up for a big fight this autumn to stop them.

The union had held large reps meetings in London, Birmingham, Bristol and

Belfast as Socialist Worker went to press. It was set to hold more in Glasgow, Liverpool and Sheffield this week.

It will take national strikes to make Royal Mail drop its plans. CWU activists have to make sure they can deliver the strongest possible vote for action.

MANUFACTURING

Can window makers see it through?

by **RICHARD BRADBURY**

WORKERS AT Sierra Windows in Paignton, Devon, walked out on Tuesday for their latest three-day strike.

Next week will be the Unite union members' twelfth walkout in the dispute over pay and the imposition of 12-hour shifts.

It could also be the last. Workers say union officials have told them that after 12 weeks the legal mandate covered by their ballot runs out.

They also say they cannot get an extension because—at the union's suggestion—bosses now want to negotiate on the contested issues.

But negotiations are not guarantees. And this is a distortion of the anti-union laws. Workers are under no obligation to stop striking after 12 weeks.

Workers picketing on Tuesday morning were furious with their officials.



Pickets in Paignton

One said, "It's like we've been stuck under a shroud of silence by the union."

But the workers refuse to be silenced. They are preparing to reballot over two new issues—bank holidays and sick pay.

They have already walked out unofficially on one day when the union didn't give its official strike notice correctly.

Like other workers before them they are learning that sometimes fighting to win means confronting the union bureaucracy as well as the bosses.

CAR WORKERS

Bosses go on offensive as BMW workers' fight stalls

CAR GIANT BMW told workers last week to sign off on losing their pension scheme or be fired and rehired on worse terms.

Bosses said they would "terminate" the contracts of 2,000 workers—around half its workforce—if they reject and call strikes against its latest offer.

Unite union members began voting last Monday in a ballot set to end on Friday.

They have already struck against BMW group's proposals, then last month voted to reject an offer. But instead of calling new strikes, Unite sat on its hands.

The new offer is little different from the initial proposals that Unite called "shameful".

BMW's blackmail should be a call to arms for the trade union movement.

Instead, Unite managed only to say it was "unable to recommend" the offer, but that it was the "best that can be achieved".

BMW is a hugely profitable and cash-rich corporation—and workers have shown they can fight back.

But their union leaders have risked demoralising workers.

It's right to reject the offer and push for more action.

One worker said, "We did not know the company could do this. We have been shafted. The union have kind of let us down the last couple of weeks.

"It's really disappointing."

SCHOOLS

Striking teachers warn cuts will harm learning

by SADIE ROBINSON

NUT UNION members at Forest Hill School struck for three days last week in a longrunning battle against cuts.

The south east London boys' school faces a £1.3 million cuts package drawn up by management and Lewisham council.

The cuts mean some 38 workers will not be returning to the school in September.

A NUT leaflet on the strike said bosses and the council have heralded a "new dawn" for Forest Hill School.

It added, "Next term will still see the same numbers of pupils, with the same range of needs, coming to Forest Hill.

"As always staff will do their best to support every pupil but, as things stand, there will be 38 fewer staff to do so.

"The restructuring means 23 support staff and 15 teaching posts will have gone. What kind of 'new dawn' is that?"

Protect

NUT members want the cuts to be reversed to protect childrens' education.

They also say the cuts will leave remaining staff with an impossible workload.

Councillors have said the school was spending too much money on staff.

They claimed the school spent 81 percent of its budget on staff.

But the NUT pointed out that an official school document shows the true figure to be 74.5 percent—less than the average of 76 percent.

As NUT rep Joe pointed out, "We have a massive teacher recruitment



FOREST HILL teachers on a previous strike

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

and retention crisis.

Pushing up workloads to unsustainable levels will just make that worse."

Forest Hill School has £100,000 for "contingency".

It could use this money to

reverse the cuts. The council could also renegotiate the school's deficit so that it can be repaid over a longer period—or write off the debt altogether.

●Send messages of support to secretary@lewisham.nut.org.uk

Walking out across London

A NUMBER of teachers' strikes spread across London last week.

NUT union members at Stoke Newington school in east London struck last Wednesday against cuts.

A further strike set for Tuesday of this week was called off after bosses made concessions.

NUT members at Drayton Green primary school in Ealing, west London, struck last Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

They are fighting a threat to turn the school into an academy.

Teachers at Willenhall Academy in Walsall and King Solomon Academy in Westminster struck last Wednesday.

Strikes at City Heights EACT school in south London, Our Lady's Covenant in east London and Oaks Park school in Redbridge were called off after school bosses made concessions.

CARNIVAL AGAINST THE CUTS

**Sunday 16 July, 12 noon
Victoria Embankment.**

**Rally at Parliament
Square, 1:30pm**

**Called by the Fair Funding
For All Schools campaign
and backed by the NUT, ATL
and NAHT unions. Go to
fairfundingforallschools.org**

Cabin crew take a stand

>>Continued from page 20
staff travel discount.

Sarah told Socialist Worker, "I have two little kids to support, and on this wage that's not possible.

"Now I'm losing the staff travel allowance it means I can't take them on holiday. And that's just because I exercised my legal right to strike."

In response to the strike BA has cancelled some flights, diverted its other fleets to cover some and "wet-leased"—hiring planes with staff from other airlines—to cover the rest.

Strikers largely accept the idea that it's impossible to ask other workers to refuse to fly their routes.

Nevertheless, the potential is there, particularly among BA's other fleets where many workers support the strike and stand to gain from beating the penny-pinching bosses.

And to overcome BA's intransigence the question of solidarity will have to be addressed.

Unite leaders should campaign for and encourage walkouts by other groups.

Division and low pay is the point of the mixed fleet.

It relies on a high turnover of workers, bringing lower expectations and a lower level of organisation. Graham said, "The whole model is that after three years they don't want you any more."

But bosses didn't reckon with workers' determination.

Action on rail networks

>>Continued from page 20
coordinated walkouts on the three networks have had a huge impact on services.

Aslef union drivers on Southern are balloting again for strikes over the company's attempt to conflate pay and changes to working practices, the union said. The ballot closes on 13 July.

The battle on Southern provides a warning to Northern and Merseyrail workers of how bosses will try to divide workers in different grades and unions.

The solidarity between RMT and Aslef members during the last strikes in the north must be built on.

Successive Tory transport ministers and officials at the Department for Transport have gone to war with the unions, using every means at their disposal to push through new changes. A key priority is to extend driver only operation of trains. Their plans must be stopped.

Everyone must back the unions resisting these attacks on safety and accessible travel for all.

COLLEGES

Defending suspended rep

UCU UNION members at the College of North West London (CNWL) struck last Wednesday and Saturday in defence of suspended union rep Indro Sen.

UCU members voted by 93 percent for strikes in response, and struck for two days earlier this year.

A second ballot delivered an 83 percent vote for strikes on a 54 percent turnout—beating the new harsher thresholds in the Trade Union Act. Workers plan a protest on 24 August, enrolment day.

Sen was suspended after leading a fight against a

planned merger of CNWL and the City of Westminster College.

■UCU UNION members at Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College struck on Thursday of last week over job cuts.

Workers backed strikes by 83 percent in a recent ballot. Bosses have refused to rule out compulsory redundancies.

They tried to intimidate workers from taking action by threatening to reduce the redundancy deal for workers if the UCU didn't cancel its strike ballot.

HOUSING

Furious residents march against Labour council

UP TO 1,000 tenants, residents and their supporters marched on Haringey Civic Centre in north London on Monday night.

A cabinet meeting of the Labour-run council was debating the finalising of the Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV).

This £2 billion "regeneration" plan would see social cleansing across seven estates in the north London borough.

Protesters at the demonstration last

night brushed the lines of police and security guards aside. Chants of "No social cleansing, no HDV" rang out as dozens of protesters shook the civic centre's glass door.

As the protesters threatened to break in, councillors kicked out reporters and observers to hold a secret session of the council.

Disgracefully councillors voted for the HDV but it's likely to go to a judicial review.

●Read the full story online at bit.ly/2tEu0s5

MANCHESTER

HOUSING WORKERS in Manchester began a four-week continuous strike on Monday.

Unite union members are fighting for demands including pay parity and against new contracts which would see the introduction of flexible working and increased hours.

Some 170 workers are involved in the dispute. The difference in pay between them can be as high as £3,500 in some cases. Once the four weeks of continuous action are concluded, workers will return to their initial three days a week—Monday, Thursday and Friday. Workers also held a protest as part of their dispute on Thursday of last week. They rallied outside the Chartered Institute of Housing's "Housing 2017" conference.

●Send messages of solidarity to barckley.sumner@unitetheunion.org

MIGRANTS FIGHT TO RAISE WAGES

by TOMÁŠ TENGY-EVANS

LOW-PAID, migrant health workers in east London launched a three-day walkout on Tuesday.

Outsourcing giant Serco wants to keep their wages down. But the strikers are fighting for a pay rise of 30p an hour.

One striker, David, told Socialist Worker, “Rent is going up, bills are going up, but our pay is not.”

“Low pay means you can’t do anything nice with your family, you can’t take your kids out.”

But workers’ anger goes much deeper than pay. Under Serco, their workload has skyrocketed.

Keith, a domestic worker, explained, “We now have to do some nurses’ jobs that are defined as ‘clinical’, such as cleaning the equipment.”

And strikers said that not only is Serco making them do more work, it doesn’t give them the proper equipment.

Joana said, “If we run out of detergent supplies, management just say clean the floors with water.”



STRIKERS WERE elated to be out the door

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

“That’s not good for us or for the patients.”

There were exuberant scenes across the four sites as workers unleashed their pent-up fury at the bosses.

Over 100 strikers rallied

outside the Royal London hospital for a morning rally to chants of “Clean up Serco”.

Antonia, a domestic worker, told Socialist Worker, “Serco are wicked, wicked people.”

“They told us that going on strike would go against the patients—that’s bullying and we’re sick and tired of it.”

The workers’ experience shines a light on what

privatisation in the NHS means—bumper profits for bosses, worsening pay and conditions for workers and run-down services.

But they have already shown that they’re

determined to fight.

When Serco took over the contract in April they slashed workers’ tea breaks.

In response the cleaners struck unofficially and won them back.

Alison, a union rep, told Socialist Worker, “When I got into the kitchen I was told I couldn’t take my 15-minute tea break. That’s when we started to organise ourselves—we stand as one and we can win.”

Unite balloted workers for action after the unofficial walkout and they voted by 99 percent for strikes on a 52 percent turnout.

They plan a week-long walkout from next Tuesday and a two-week long strike from Tuesday 25 July.

Mainstream politicians often blame migrants for lowering wages.

But these migrant workers are fighting to raise them.

That’s why everyone has to build solidarity for their struggle.

Strikers’ names have been changed to protect them from victimisation

Send messages of support to bit.ly/2tMx1Uy

Cabin crew stand up to bullying British Airways

by DAVE SEWELL

BRITISH Airways (BA) cabin crew have launched a 16-day strike over pay and victimisation.

Around 3,000 Unite union members in BA’s “mixed fleet” started a new walkout last Saturday. This is their longest strike to date after a three-month gap and a series of talks.

Workers are as angry as ever at their low pay. Jason, who was picketing at Hutton Cross Tube station near Heathrow Airport, said, “I’ve had to work second jobs to make ends meet.”

“It’s really tiring to come back from a trip and

instead of recuperating do an eight or ten hour shift at a bar or waiting tables.

“Because our basic pay is so low we have to live off our flight allowances.

“That means your pay is inconsistent too—it depends what you fly

in a given month.”

One worker explained that in a bad month they were paid less than half of what they got in a good month.

Other workers are locked in a trap. They have to get advances on their

wages one month to make up for the advance on their wages they needed the previous month.

Many still live with their parents, or rely on the income of a partner. Few come close to the total pay BA advertised when they took the job.

Workers rejected BA’s insulting offer to end the dispute. One picket told Socialist Worker, “It just moved around the same pot of money without adding to it—robbing Peter to pay Paul.”

And it came with a sting in the tail—workers who strike would have a series of bonuses taken off them, including the >>>continued on page 19



Picket line at Hutton Cross Tube station

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

Action on rail networks

A SERIES of walkouts were set to begin on three rail networks across England this weekend.

Around 2,000 workers are involved in disputes provoked by the Tories’ obsession with rail privatisation and profit.

RMT union members at Northern Rail were preparing for a three-day walkout starting this Saturday.

They are to be joined by fellow union members working at Merseyrail on the first day.

Next Monday RMT members at Southern rail join them—meaning all three networks are out.

All three disputes

revolve around protecting safe and accessible rail travel for all.

Bosses want to introduce new trains, slash the role of train guards and heap sole safety responsibility on to drivers. Previous

>>>continued on page 19